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THE
BARNABYS IN AMERICA;

OR,

ADVENTURES

OF

THE WIDOW WEDDED.

BY

MRS. TROLLOPE,

AUTHORESS OF

"THE WIDOW BARNABY," "THE VICAR OF WREXHILL," &c.

IN THREE VOLS.

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THE
BARNABYS IN AMERICA.

CHAPTER I.

A slight sketch of the General's lady, who makes sundry friendly but puzzling offers to Patty—The pious lady delivers her opinions upon the origin of slavery.

IT will not be irrelevant to this minute narrative of the Barnaby progress through the United States, to give a slight sketch of this new friend of Madame Tornorino, as it will help to explain the cause for which so sedate and elegant a personage as Mrs. General Gregory deemed it desirable to cultivate an intimacy with the young and blooming impudence of our Patty. She had, in truth, very strong reasons for it.

As no race is so sharp as that which goes

neck and neck from the starting to the winning-post, so no rivalry is so keen as that which, in like manner, exists between two persons nearly equal at all points. Between the ladies of the two great Carolinian planters, General Gregory and Colonel Beauchamp, there was at their country residence, near neighbourhood and considerable intimacy: and there was also, both in country and in town, a pretty constant, but even civil struggle, for superiority, in consideration, and (as the Transatlantics expressively term it) in *standing*. When, having both of them, passed the age of forty, the two wealthy possessors of two of the finest plantations and two of the finest gangs of slaves in South Carolina, united themselves in holy wedlock with two of the most celebrated beauties of Baltimore, the young ladies were installed in their respective mansions with a degree of *first-rateness* that was very dangerously equal; for it instantly gave birth to a rivalry, which had lasted ever since.

The first atom of ground gained by either of these ladies in advance of the other, was on the part of Mrs. General Gregory, who unexpect-

edly announced, *un beau matin* to her friend and neighbour, that she had just completed an arrangement with one of the general's French correspondents (a wholesale coffee-dealer), for his despatching to her, twice every year, a box of millinery *direct from Paris*.

For a few months this blow was felt severely. It was in vain that Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp appeared in the most elegant habiliments that Charlestown, New Orleans, Baltimore, or even New York itself could furnish; for it constantly happened upon her appearing before her neighbour with any article of dress which that lady had not before seen her wear, that an observation followed, accompanied with a multitude of obliging apologies, to the effect that she had that very morning received a letter direct, from her Paris milliner, to tell her that *that* particular article was completely out of fashion, and to warn her against any attempts on the part of the milliners of the United States, to pass such things off upon her as new.

It is necessary to know the sensitive delicacy of feeling on such points which prevails among ladies of high standing in America, in order to

conceive the severity of the trial to which the temper of Mrs. Beauchamp was exposed by this mode of proceeding. The first idea which occurred to her as suggesting the possibility of relief under it, was the opening a correspondence herself with a Parisian milliner; but unfortunately, Colonel Beauchamp's coffee was all consigned to Liverpool, and he had no French correspondent whatever. No, not even so much as at Havre, who might assist in favouring such a design. It was therefore after many vain attempts, finally abandoned, and the genius of Mrs. Beauchamp was called upon to devise some counter-current of superiority, which might enable her to shun the buffetings, and the bruises, which the high tide of her friend's good fortune had brought upon her.

Nor did the lady long meditate upon the subject in vain. She really was a clever woman, though on some particular subjects a little more vehement than reasonable; and upon every thing relating to her "unequalled country," as she always called it, and every thing connected with its constitution, laws, customs, and peculiarities, from an abhorrence of monarchy to an

adoration of slavery inclusive, she not only was vehement both in feeling and expression, but would have considered it a very grievous sin to be otherwise.

People, who like Mrs. Beauchamp, think and speak, with more violence than profundity, are apt to attach value to their own powers of advocating whatever cause they espouse, and while the lady of Big Gang Bank, was meditating at what point her powers of intellect or of fortune might best enable her to outshine the lady of Rice Lawn Paradise, a certain thought darted into her head, which had she been desired to explain it, she would probably have called "a patriotic inspiration."

She suddenly remembered how her father, of honoured and blessed memory, had ceased not, morning, noon, or night, as long as life had been lent him, to hold forth on the atrocious *dishonesty* and *injustice* (these specific accusations being the favourite stronghold of his clique) of all those who dared to impugn the holiness and the lawfulness of slavery. She remembered too, the love, the reverence, the gratitude, and the admiration with which he had

ever been listened to by every body, or at least by every body whose love, reverence, gratitude, and admiration, she thought worth having; and from that moment of happy reminiscence, which occurred exactly three years after her marriage, down to the present hour, Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp had acquired the reputation of being the most thorough-going, out-and-out patriot, and right-down, first-rate smart woman in the Union.

The result of this very brilliant success was speedily seen and painfully felt by Mrs. General Gregory: but she, too, as it seemed, had some kind, guardian spirit that watched over her destiny.

Some of

The light militia of the lower sky,

who in all lands watch over the changeful little destinies of the ladies, led her from Rice Lawn Paradise to the city of Baltimore, precisely at the moment when it was

Glowing like furnace

from end to end, with the burning eloquence of

a multitude of itinerant preachers, assembled there from all parts of the country, for the purpose of celebrating that very singular transatlantic solemnity, called "a Revival."

The same guardian sylph who had guided her in this propitious hour to Baltimore, guided her likewise into a fashionable chapel, where a fashionable preacher was assuring a multitude of fashionable ladies, that without the grace and comfort which he, and a few of his particular friends and brethren alone could give, they must all fall headlong into the bottomless pit.

While listening to this much-admired gentleman, Mrs. General Gregory was greatly struck by the beautiful display of feeling with which many first-rate ladies came forward at his call, and placed themselves on "the anxious benches" set apart for all those who wished to distinguish themselves by such a fearless demonstration of piety as this act demanded. In truth, Mrs. General Gregory was like many other persons, *very much* struck by this edifying spectacle.

She, too, wished to be distinguished, having, as we know, very particular reasons for it; and here (most providentially displayed to her) was

a mode by which this earnest wish might be at once obtained. During the few moments of hesitation which followed the conception of this happy idea, she overheard the following remarks from some of the most elegantly-dressed ladies in the chapel, who fortunately happened to be placed immediately before her.

“My!” exclaimed one of them, “if there isn’t Mrs. Governor Robson going right away for the anxious bench! That will make a pretty considerable noise, won’t it?”

“Noise? I expect so, my dear,” was the reply; “and won’t she,” added the second speaker, “be more the thing than ever with all the highflyers! My! what a sight of parties she’ll be giving this Revival, I’ll engage for it; and what an unhandsome fix we should have got into, shouldn’t we, if we had taken it into our heads to stay away? We should have got no invites, you may be availed of that, I expect.”

All this was uttered with very little restraint as to the tone of voice, for the noise produced near the anxious benches by the exhortations or the comfortings of the preachers prevented any

thing uttered in any other part of the chapel from being heard, except by those very near the speaker. Every word, however, was distinctly heard by Mrs. General Gregory, and every word produced effect.

Before the same hour on the following day, she had been presented to the most celebrated of the reverend gentlemen, who were at that time performing at Baltimore, and having with all due ceremony declared herself desirous of becoming one of his congregation, she was installed as “a sister” accordingly—appeared on the anxious bench a few days afterwards, and being a lady of large fortune, and particularly desirous of becoming—

If not the first, in the very first line,

soon became spoken of in all directions as one of the most shining lights which had been for a long time added to the temple of the new Jerusalem.

For some time the excellent and exemplary Mrs. General Gregory had every possible reason to be satisfied with the effects of the course she had pursued; she became, in her turn, the

centre of a circle, and felt herself fully as able to sustain a competition with Mrs Colonel Beauchamp as she had ever been. But at length she had the sagacity to discover that "highly distinguished" as she was, Mrs. Beauchamp's essays on the righteousness of slavery were listened to with more *gusto* by their mutual acquaintance, than her own little sermonettes on the righteousness of the elect; nor did the cause of this long remain a mystery to her. She saw plainly, in short, that the magnates of South Carolina were more inclined to sympathize with her rival's enthusiasm than with her own; and from this time forward it would have been impossible for any one acquainted with all the circumstances of the case, not to have admired the skill with which she made head against the difficulties she encountered. Her conversation became a sort of curious mosaic, made up as it were with bits of black and white, and showed such a skilful mixture of Christian texts, with slave-holding principles, as could certainly be met with in no country of the world, save that of which she had the honour and happiness of being a citizen.

But it answered perfectly ; and if Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp was known among the best society of the Union, as a right-down first-rate patriot lady, Mrs. General Gregory was equally renowned as toppermost among the right-thinking of the saintly party, who knew the duty they owed to the Stars and the Stripes too well not to make up their religious principles square with the same.

It may in some cases be true that the native *literati* of America have no great reason to boast of the honours and profits accorded upon them in their own country, at least, before they have received the *timbre* bestowed upon them by the approbation of ours ; but if they find readier and warmer welcome in other lands, the *literati* of other lands, *en revanche*, find in the United States a warmer welcome, perhaps, than any where else ; it being quite sufficient for an individual to carry the name of author there, in order to ensure him a buzz of celebrity from one end of the country to the other.

No wonder, therefore, was it that Mrs. General Gregory, being in the position above described, should be desirous of sharing in the

great Barnaby intimacy enjoyed by Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp; and when she discovered, as she did at the party of Mrs. Judge Johnson, that besides the authorship, there was the still nearer and dearer claim to friendship, which Mrs. Barnaby's loudly proclaimed opinion on the *great African subject* gave her, there was nothing which she did not feel ready to do, and to say, in order to obtain a forward and conspicuous place in the good opinion of the family.

No sooner, however, had Madame Tornorino become fully aware of the strongly pious propensities of her visiter, than her ardour to cultivate the acquaintance relaxed; and it is probable that she would not long have delayed betraying some symptoms of this, had not Mrs. General Gregory, either from anticipating this very natural result, or from yielding to her own native propensities, suddenly "changed her hand," and led the discourse to gayer themes.

"But, oh my!" she exclaimed, with a pleasant little laugh, "I must not keep on talking for everlasting this way about chapel-going, and all that sort of thing, to a pretty young lady like you, Madame Tornorino, who in course must have

your mind filled up, as yet, with plenty of other things—in part, you know, I mean, my dear—and that is all so very natural, that I can't say I realize it's being any wise improper. You will be pleased to remember, my dear, that my carriage and servants, and myself too, will be quite at your service, Madame Tornorino, whenever you like to declare your congregation—and I'll take you to the best seat in the chapel for seeing the company and the dresses, as well as for hearing that blessed vessel, Mr. Crawley, pour forth his balm : but if you like it better in the first place, I'll be delighted to take you with me and your honourable mamma too, if she'll be pleased to go to a first-rate dancing party to-morrow night, that the lady of our prime newspaper-writer of all this south part of the Union is going to give."

"Thank you, ma'am," replied Patty, cheerily. "I should like it best of any thing ; that is, if you are going to be so kind as to ask my husband, Don Tornorino, too?"

"Most certainly, my dear, I am. And will you go with me to chapel, next sabbath?"

Patty paused for half a moment before she re-

plied, and her answer showed that she was improving rapidly in wisdom of all sorts.

“ Oh, dear ! yes, certainly, ma’am. I suppose that is just the same as going to church in England, which is the best thing, I am sure, that one can do of a Sunday, because you know—”

It was lucky, perhaps, that Mrs. Gregory’s general habit of making herself spokeswoman upon all religious subjects caused her to break in at this point upon Patty’s speech, as it is possible that she might have completed it by adding—“ there is no other place full of people to go to ;” but when her new acquaintance did it for her, by saying,

“ I do, indeed, my dear—I do know that no place, except the Heaven of Heavens its blessed self, can be so good for Christians to enter as the chapels and churches of the saints,” Patty was discreet enough to answer,

“ Oh, yes ; to be sure, ma’am every one knows that of course ;” adding, however, for the sake of a little useful information, “ but you don’t seem to be too stiff to go to dances and parties, ma’am ?”

“ Goodness forbid,* I should, my dear !” replied the general’s lady. “ I hold it to be ex-

ceedingly sinful to turn my back upon the weak and the sinning, just because I have made my own election sure. I am sorry and grieved to say that there are in the Union some professing Christians, and not a few I am afraid, who act very differently. If you visit the eastern cities, you will find many such—but they are clearly benighted in their generation—and go about, it is dreadful to think of it, doing mischief instead of good ; for it is the very same people as turn their faces away from their white fellow-creatures, as if they were not good enough for them, that go communing with the very people that wear God's mark upon their skins. The black descendants of the wicked Cain, you know, my dear young lady, the horrid impure nigger slaves, that wear by nature the mark that ought to warn the people of God to turn away from them, and make them to labour from the rising up of the sun, even to the going down of the same, as the hand of the Lord points out.

“ But we of the South, Madame Tornorino, I am happy and blessed to say, know better. You will never hear of such abominations among the educated and elegant gentry of the slave-holding

states—we are quite altogether a different people and population, as I hope your dear mamma will make manifest. And as to not going to balls and parties, my dear, I should blush to show any such weakness.”

This last sentence, as every last sentence ought to do, left so pleasant an impression upon the mind of the person to whom it was addressed, that she remembered nothing which preceded it with displeasure; and when Mrs. General Gregory took her leave, Madame Tornorino was quite ready to declare that “though a bit of quiz in her talk now and then, she was upon the whole a most delightful woman, and that she should take good care to be very intimate with her.”

CHAPTER II.

Mrs. Allen Barnaby commences her Work on the United States of America—Mrs. Beauchamp requests a Specimen of it—A Fine National Trait.

WHILE the visit of Mrs. General Gregory lasted, Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp continued in some sort to keep watch over Mrs. Allen Barnaby, for the idea of her leaving her note-book for the purpose of receiving the civilities of the general's lady, was very particularly disagreeable to the lady of the colonel, and she was determined not to quit her, till the danger was past. Nor was the keeping her, pen in hand, the only use which she made of this interval. She had pledged herself to several of the most important personages in the southern part of the Union that such a book should be written by her English friend on the country in general, and on the

slave-holding states in particular, as had never yet appeared from the pen of any European traveller, and which would be calculated to do unspeakable good in every part of the world, as tending to put in a right point of view, that which had hitherto been so repeatedly placed in a wrong one.

Having proclaimed this, and received in consequence of it the most cordial thanks, and the warmest eulogiums on her patriotic zeal, it was become a matter of great personal importance to Mrs. Beauchamp, that Mrs. Allen Barnaby should lose no time in giving proof unquestionable, and evidence as clear as light, that she, Mrs. Beauchamp, had in no way misrepresented or exaggerated either the purpose or the power of this distinguished traveller. With this object, she determined, if possible, to induce her immediately to produce a specimen, sufficient to prove ; first, that she really was employed in writing on the subject ; and secondly, that her manner of treating it was what she had declared it should be.

Hitherto all that Mrs. Allen Barnaby appeared to have done was the scribbling a few

words, first on one page and then on another, of her new note-book. This had been performed in the presence of Mrs. Beauchamp ; and though that well-educated lady felt that this was very likely to be the way in which books were really made, she felt that she should be better satisfied if she could see a sheet or two of full sized paper, written all over, and with a title at the beginning. This feeling, however, arose much less from any doubts she entertained respecting either the intentions or the capacity of Mrs. Allen Barnaby, than from an almost feverish impatience that the business should begin. Mrs. Beauchamp had a pretty considerable good opinion of her own ability, and she had no doubt whatever that if Mrs. Allen Barnaby would once set to work, there could be (as long as she continued near her) no doubt whatever of her producing precisely the sort of thing that was wished for. Hardly, therefore, had Cleopatra's step ceased to clatter on the stairs, when the lady of the colonel thus addressed the lady of the major,

“How thoroughly elegant and clever this is of you, my dear Mrs. Allen Barnaby, thus to give up everything, as I may say, for your great

work. But I promise you, my dear Madam, that your light shall not be hid under a bushel, but shall blaze away before the judge, and before every body else of the greatest real high-standing in New Orleans. They will one and all be ready to worship the ground you tread upon when I tell them, as I most certainly shall do, that you give up everything for the sake of progressing with your travels. You don't know, my dear Mrs. Allen Barnaby, the prodigious fuss that the people will make about you, as you go on, if it is actually known for certain that you are positively employed upon such a work as we have been talking about."

"Known for certain, my dear friend?" returned Mrs. Allen Barnaby, with something like indignation in her tone; "do you mean to say that any body doubts it?"

"I don't mean, I expect, to say anything that could hurt your feelings, dear lady," returned Mrs. Beauchamp, "but when you know our splendid national character better, you will understand the sort of fineness of intellect which always make them doubt everything that they don't see with their eyes. And I must say that

this, taken together with some other of their ways of going on, does make out upon the whole the most finished model of a perfect gentleman in the world. Because you see, my dear lady, that this doubtingness does not argue any want of trustfulness, which might seem suspicious and no way noble. But that's what nobody can say. For where is the nation to be found who gives and takes credit like the Americans? Oh, no! It is not for want of trust; for everything is done upon trust here, and if it was not it would never be done at all. But it is just about things where nothing is to be got by giving or taking credit that they are so particular; for then their fine national sense tells them, plain enough, that the best way to believe is to see."

"That is indeed a very fine trait to which you have just alluded," said Mrs. Allen Barnaby, seizing her note-book, which for a moment she had laid aside, "that national habit of feeling confidence, and acting so completely as you say upon credit, ought to be dwelt upon, and must, I should think, my dear Madam, have a very considerable effect upon my English readers; for

in our country, as I have always understood, it is necessary to show a good deal of ready money before you can ever get credit at all. It really is a very fine national trait."

And Mrs. Allen Barnaby wrote several lines in her note-book.

"It is a fine national trait replied Mrs. Beauchamp, with great energy, and it is American all over. But, to come back, my dear lady, to what I was saying about our clear-headed citizens liking to see before they believe, it is quite beautiful, I expect, to observe how the two things unite and make one, as I may say, in the minds of our patriots. And you, my dear Mrs. Allen Barnaby, who are smart enough so clearly to comprehend these first-rate qualities, you would, I expect, be the very last to refuse compliance with the wishes of all the people of first standing in New Orleans at this moment present. You would not like to do that, Mrs. Allen Barnaby, I guess? Say."

"Not for the universe, my dearest friend!" exclaimed the authoress. "Tell me but what these patriotic gentlemen wish me to do, and I will do it instantly."

“ There is not a single one of them, my dear madam, but what shall be availed of your great obligingness,” returned her friend. “ All that I wish you to do, my excellent lady, is just that you should write out a bit of a sort of introductory chapter, saying what you are going to do, and what you think of all you have seen as yet, and your principles and opinions about the slaves ; and then write at the top of it the title in good large letters, that should look something like the beginning of a real book, and that, I guess, will be all they wish for just at present ; and for this I won’t deny but what they are longing, one and all of them. They took care to avail me of that, I promise you, before I took leave of Mrs. Judge Johnson last night.”

There was something rather abruptly startling to Mrs. Allen Barnaby in this unexpected demand, but being a woman of nerve, instead of a nervous woman, she sustained the attack with great resolution, and after about a moment’s reflection, replied smilingly, “ You are aware, my dear friend, that the book in question is to be the history of my travels through your noble country. Do you think that as yet I

have seen enough of it to venture upon writing any thing?"

"Oh dear me, yes, my good lady, without any question of doubt you have," replied Mrs. Beauchamp. "All that we ask for as yet, you know, is just what sort of feeling the first sight of the country produced; and your views founded upon your own good sense, about the niggers; promising, you know, to study the question deeply as you progress, and then the title; and that's just about all that we want for the present, so that a mere page or two of writing you see will do."

"Then a page or two of writing shall be produced immediately," replied Mrs. Allen Barnaby with decision. "But of course, you are aware, dear madam, that we authors always find it necessary to be alone when we write our books. It is always a terrible pain to part with you, my dear Mrs. Beauchamp, but if I am to set about writing at once, I must have a minute or two to myself if you please, just to think about it."

Mrs. Beauchamp herself seemed to consider that this was no more than reasonable, and

hearing Mrs. General Gregory's carriage drive away at that moment, she got up at once and left the room, saying as she went towards the door, "Oh my! how I do envy you, Mrs. Allen Barnaby! Such a subject to be sure as you have got before you; and such kind and partial readers as you are like to find among us."

"Envy me, indeed!" muttered the over-hurried authoress as the door was closed upon her, "what idiot fools they must all be to fancy that I have seen any wonders to write about in rather less than a week. The most wonderful thing I know about them is what I got from Donny, as to their every one of them being cheats, and that is curious enough to be sure, and might amuse the folks at home to know, if one did but dare to tell it. But this is all folly and nonsense, and as like as I can be to quarrelling with one's bread and butter. If they were not the vain peacocks they are, how would my sitting down to write a book about them be so like as it is to make my fortune before it is half done?"

And soothed by this agreeable reflection, Mrs. Allen Barnaby really did set about her task in

good earnest, settling her chair, placing a whole quire of paper before her, and fixing a steel pen to her fancy.

“Half done?” she repeated, with a little, quiet, solitary laugh. “Half a sheet will be enough to turn all their heads, and to bring them crawling on all fours to my feet, if I do but put in palaver enough.”

And now the important business was actually begun, and Mrs. Allen Barnaby in turning over the first page of her book turned over a new page in her own history also; and she felt this—felt that her genius had now brought her to another epoch of her fate, and she doubted not but that she should date from it the growth and the ripening of honour, profit and renown.

“What matters it,” said she, renewing her soliloquy, “what matters it how or in what manner a book or any thing else is managed, so that one gets just exactly the thing one wants by it? It would be just as easy for me to write all truth as all lies, about this queer place, and all these monstrous odd people, but wouldn’t I be a fool if I did any such thing?—and is it one bit more trouble to write all these

monstrous fine words, just like what I have read over, and over again, in novels,—is it one bit more trouble I should like to know, writing them all in one sense instead of the other?”

Mrs. Allen Barnaby suspended her soliloquy at this point, and began leisurely and critically to read what she had written. She smiled—as perhaps only authors smile, as she perused the sentences which she had composed.

“I always have succeeded in every thing that I attempted to do,” she said, with a feeling of triumphant confidence which made her grasp her pen firmly, and replenish it with ink as confidently as ever soldier drew his sword, or cocked his pistol; and again she wrote. Page after page became covered with the somewhat broad and square, but tolerably firm characters of her pen, till once again she stopped, took breath, and reasoned a little.

“Well, to be sure,” thought she, “these American people do seem to be out of luck, by their own account, in all the books that have been written about them. Poor souls! By what they say I suppose they have been pretty roughly drawn over the coals, by one

and all of the author gentry that have set to work upon them ; and then here come I, quite as well able to write a book as any of them, I fancy, and ready enough for my own particular reasons to praise them all, up to the very skies ; and yet, somehow or other, I don't suppose that any living soul, but themselves, will believe there is a word of truth in it from beginning to end ; and that I do call being monstrous unlucky. But what the deuce do I care for that ? I have got an object, I suppose, and my business is to obtain it, without bothering my brains about who will or will not believe all the things that I choose to write down."

And now again Mrs. Allen Barnaby resumed her pen, and the colourless paper became rapidly tinted by her ink.

" It is a good thing, however," she resumed, " that it goes off so glib and easy as it seems to do. If I was always quite sure about the spelling of the words, I declare I think I should find it quite as easy as talking. I do wonder sometimes, where I got all my cleverness from. There isn't many, though I say it, that shouldn't

—but that's only when nobody hears me—there isn't many that could go on as I have done, from the very first almost, that I remember any thing, always getting on, and on, and on. There's a pretty tolerable difference, thank Heaven! between what I am now with judges and members, and I don't know who all, smirking and speechifying to me, and what I was when my name was Martha Compton, without two decent gowns perhaps, to my back, and not knowing where on earth to get another when they were gone! However," added the retrospective lady, smiling, as some comical recollection seemed to cross her mind, "I contrived to manage pretty well, even then; and I shall contrive to manage pretty well now, too, or I'm greatly mistaken. There; that's enough for one bout," and so saying, the well pleased Mrs. Allen Barnaby laid the sheets she had filled, neatly together, and went to look at herself for a minute or two in the glass.

"Well," she murmured, again in soothing soliloquy, "if I don't look quite as young as I did when I was Martha Compton, I have gained in dignity quite as much as I've lost

in beauty. I do look like a duchess, I'll be hanged if I don't—and I do believe in my conscience, that when I can get the things to put on, I dress as well as any woman that ever lived—I see nobody any where that looks as really stylish as I do, and just the sort of thing, I should think, for a fashionable authoress—no shyness, no stupid, awkward fear of any body or any thing. I certainly have, thank God! a great many advantages—and I may thank myself that I know how to make use of them.”

In short, few authors ever rose from their first hour of literary labour better satisfied with themselves and their production, than Mrs. Allen Barnaby. But she had still another hour of leisure before it was necessary for her to begin dressing for dinner, and for an evening party that was to follow after; Mrs. Carmichael having obligingly desired her boarders to invite any friends they liked, as she was going to have a *soirée* herself.

On looking at her watch, and perceiving that this unoccupied interval remained, Mrs. Allen Barnaby's first thought was to employ it by

going to seek "Patty and the Perkinses," in order to indulge herself by vapouring a little about her new occupation ; but a second thought brought with it a doubt as to how far any one of the three might be capable of appreciating the species of dignity which she was beginning very strongly to feel belonged to her, in her new character, and she therefore changed her purpose into the much more profitable one of sitting down again to her writing-table.

"I know a thing will put 'em all in a rapture of delight," thought Mrs. Allen Barnaby, as she again took up her pen. "I will just write down a list of questions for Mrs. Beauchamp, or her famous Judge Johnson to answer, and they will do double work, or I am greatly mistaken, for it will put them all upon thinking and saying that I am so clever, and so anxious for information ! And at the same time it will give them exactly what they seem to love best in the world, and that is an opportunity of talking about themselves, and their country, and their glorious constitution."

She then took a fresh sheet of paper, and

after a little reflection produced the following list of interrogatories.

“ In what manner does the republican form of government appear to affect the social habits of the people ?

“ How far does the absence of a national form of worship produce the results anticipated from it ?

“ At what degree of elevation may the education of the ladies of the Union be considered to stand, when compared to that received by the females of other countries ?

“ In what manner was slavery originally instituted ?

“ And what are its real effects both on the black and the white population ?”

Mrs. Allen Barnaby almost laughed aloud with delight, when she had written the above ; and in truth she had very sufficient reason to be contented with herself. A very few days had passed since the hour in which she had heard, for the first time in her life, any one of the above subjects alluded to ; and had not the admirable quickness of her charming intellect

enabled her to catch the very words which she had heard used by the distinguished patriots among whom she had so happily fallen, the writing the above pithy sentences would have been as completely out of her power as the inditing so much Greek. But never did any woman know better how to profit by opportunity than Mrs. Allen Barnaby, and great as was the elevation to which she now appeared likely to reach, it is impossible to deny that she deserved it.

She then began in excellent spirits, the somewhat laborious, but always delightful, labours of the toilet, with a heart as gay, and an eye very nearly as bright, as when she had dressed to meet Lord Mucklebury at her first Cheltenham ball. In truth, every thing seemed to favour her projects, and assure her the most unqualified success. The party about to assemble that evening, in Mrs. Carmichael's ample saloon, was likely to be very miscellaneous, inasmuch as every boarder had the privilege of giving invitations, as freely as Mrs. Carmichael herself, an arrangement which could not fail of bringing together exactly such a mixture of

“all sorts of men,” as it would be most desirable for her to “gain golden opinions” from. And golden, or at any rate, silver opinions, she was determined to make them.

Mrs. Allen Barnaby was still in the act of adoring,

With head uncovered, the cosmetic powers,

when the major entered. He was immediately struck by the general brightness and animation of her aspect, and exclaimed,

“Heyday, my Barnaby!—what has happened now? If there were any Lady Susans here, I should say that some of them had been making some charming proposal for taking you to court again. Upon my soul, my dear, you look as if you had been eating live birds, and that their bright little eyes were looking out, through your own. Who have you seen?—what have you been doing?”

And though the major as he spoke began steadily enough the business of refreshing his dress, he continued to keep his eyes fixed upon his ample spouse, with a good deal of curiosity, and it may be, with a little admiration.

“Who have I seen, and what have I been doing?” repeated his lady, with a very benignant smile; “as to seeing, Mr. Major, I have seen little or nothing—except, indeed, that everlasting Mrs. Beauchamp. But as to *doing*—it is not my place to talk about that, Donny dear. I will just leave you to form your own judgment on the subject; upon my word we have neither of us any time to talk about it now! for I’m not half done yet; and as for you, your beard is as long as Aaron’s, major, though I know you mowed it only yesterday, but that comes of the climate, you know; so set to, there’s a good man; and in the course of the evening, I will see if I cannot indulge you, my dear, with a little insight into what I have done, am doing, and may be about to do.”

“Well, I must consent, I suppose, to live in the dark, my dear, till it shall be your will and pleasure to grant me light,” returned her amiable husband; and while the dressing lasted, nothing further passed between them on the subject of Mrs. Allen Barnaby’s occupations, except a few mystic, and perfectly unintelligible words, uttered from time to time, by the lady herself.

CHAPTER III.

Mrs. Carmichael entertains a splendid evening party, of which Mrs. Allen Barnaby is the heroine.—The nature and principles of her book are fully explained to the company, and received with enthusiastic applause.—Mrs. Allen Barnaby propounds various questions to the company, which are most satisfactorily answered.

THE evening party at Mrs. Carmichael's was a very large one—much larger, as that panting and blowing lady assured the company, than she had at all expected; adding, however, that if they could all make themselves comfortable, she should be right down glad they were all come—though for sure and certain she did not expect the one-half so many.

Neither the invited, nor the inviters, however, appeared at all offended by these hints, and tea, coffee, lemonade, and whisky drinking, went

on very prosperously. At length, Mrs. Beauchamp (who in answer to a question gently asked, had learnt from her friend, Mrs. Allen Barnaby, that she had no objection whatever to her mentioning the fact of her having actually begun her work), addressing herself particularly to that portion of the company which crowded round herself and her splendid English friend, said,

“I have the greatest of pleasure in informing the Honourable Judge Johnson, his lady, General Gregory, Mrs. General Gregory, and in short all the friends that are interested in the news, that our talented English lady friend, Mrs. Major Allen Barnaby has done—commenced her elegant and handsome work upon the land of the Stars and the Stripes; and I am not that much doubtful of her kindness, but what I think there is pretty considerable good hope that if the Honourable Judge Johnson would make the request to the lady, she would favour the company by reading up a little of it for their advantage, and that Mrs. Major Allen Barnaby would be clever enough to sit down straight away at once, and give us the pleasure and im-

provement we wish for, by making us acquainted with what she has done.”

This harangue was received by a murmur of applause that evidently proceeded, not only from that portion of the company particularly addressed, but from every quarter of the room; and when the buzz this produced had a little subsided, the Honourable Judge Johnson replied,

“We cannot by many degrees thank you enough, my excellent Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp, for the service which your truly patriotic conduct has conferred upon us all. But in the name not only of the present company, but of every part of the Union (except, indeed, that unhappy portion of it which refuses to rejoice in the greatest blessing left to us by the mighty Washington, and sanctified, as I may say, by the holy memory of the immortal Jefferson—I mean, of course, the misguided states who refuse to possess the blessing of a slave), in the name of the present company, and of all the soundly patriotic portion of the Union, I beg to thank your admirable friend for the very noble effort she is making in the cause of truth and

impartiality—and I beg to say that one and all of us, neither can, nor do desire any thing better than just to sit ourselves down round about the lady, so that we may not lose a single one of the precious words which she is going to have the elegant cleverness to read to us.”

The consequence of this speech from the richest man in the room was an immediate drawing together of the company round Mrs. Allen Barnaby, while several of the gentlemen began actively to move forward a table, a chair, and a footstool, for the authoress ; and when she had placed herself, which she did with great stateliness and dignity, every one present got as near to her as was conveniently possible, every sofa and every chair being put in requisition, and made to approach the end of the room, whence the attraction emanated.

The Honourable Judge Johnson himself sat at her right hand, and her deeply interested friend Mrs. Beauchamp at her left. Miss Matilda Perkins who had found out a new way of making herself interesting and agreeable to the many tall, beautiful-looking American gentlemen who still continued to take so much de-

lightful notice of her, ceased not in the very central place which she had chosen, to indulge in the most expressive dumb-show demonstrations of love and admiration for the authoress, assuring several in whispers breathed into their eagerly presented ears, that her dearest of all dear friends, Mrs. Allen Barnaby, was certainly sent by Providence to speak of that unequalled country called the United States of America in the manner it deserved, for that there never was, no never, such a woman for talents and learning of all sorts; her crowning phrase being at the end of every whisper, "Oh! Madame de Stale was nothing to her!"

The quiet Miss Louisa, only too happy in being permitted to have a place by her friend Annie, sat at an open window at some distance from the more crowded part of the room, while Mr. Egerton, who now paid her quite attention enough to have convinced her sister had she been its object, that he was only waiting for a favourable opportunity of declaring himself her lover, stationed himself at a convenient point for speaking either to her, or her "*thoroughly American*" companion, if he wished it, without the

necessity to do it so loudly as to attract the attention of others.

The major, who was exceedingly amused, and also exceedingly well pleased by the apparent success of this new exhibition of his wife's cleverness, had placed himself very much at his ease on one of the sofas that was too large and heavy to be moved, but from whence he had a full view of her, and of all her goings on, and being well aware of the audibility of her voice, he had no fear but that he should hear every word she spoke.

Patty, who was still too much in love to think it much worth while to listen to any thing but her husband, having entered the room when it was full, employed some time in a very active search for him, and at length discovered that her beloved Don was fast asleep under an orange tree on the balcony. But as none of her pinches and twitches sufficed to awaken him, she at length determined to leave him at peace, and placed herself next to her beautifully-dressed friend, Mrs. General Gregory, finding a great relief in an accurate examination of all she wore, whenever it happened that her mamma's eloquence was particularly overpowering.

The movement, and the bustle, and the whisper, and the buzz, which of necessity precedes the calm required for such a business as that now going on, being at length over, the Honourable Judge Johnson said aloud, and very distinctly, "Now then, my dear lady, we all trust and hope that you are ready to begin."

Mrs. Allen Barnaby bowed with grace and dignity to the gentleman who thus addressed her, shook a lavender-water odour from her pocket-handkerchief, pushed back with the tips of her left-hand fingers the abounding curls from her forehead, and with those of her right, lightly passed over the page that lay on the table before her, to restore its level smoothness, and then began,

"JUSTICE DONE AT LAST;

OR,

THE TRAVELS OF MRS. MAJOR ALLEN BARNABY
THROUGH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA."

Having pronounced this title in a voice clear, distinct, and very sufficiently loud, the lady paused for a moment to let the applause she expected, and which failed not to come, pass



away. Mr. Egerton, whose eyes had been fixed on the authoress as she read it, turned, perhaps involuntarily, to the face of Annie afterwards. It might be that he expected to see her look exceedingly delighted at the prospect thus held out of praise and honour to be conferred on her beloved country; but if so, he was disappointed, for the fair face of the young lady was tinted with a blush that looked much more like the glow of anger or of shame than of pleasure; and as her eye met his, she turned from him with a frown of displeasure which he could not help thinking was exceedingly undeserved, he never having taken any such liberty as that which now seemed to displease her in his life. He consoled himself, however, by remembering how excessively absurd it would be, should he try to persuade himself that he cared a straw whether an American Miss smiled or frowned upon him. So he did but smile in return for her frown, and again fixed his eyes on Mrs. Allen Barnaby.

The applause created by her title being over, and expectant silence restored, that lady again took her manuscript from the table, where she had replaced it, while slightly agitating her hand-

kerchief, and gracefully acknowledging the plaudits of the company by her smiles and bows, and thus resumed :

“ In giving to the world the following narrative of my travels through that most glorious country known by the name of the United States of America, my principal object is to wipe away from the minds of my readers every trace of all that they have ever read or heard upon that subject before ; for till this has been done it is vain to hope that the multitude of important facts with which I have been fortunate enough to become acquainted, can be received as they ought to be. [Nobody properly qualified to write upon this wonderful country could behold a single town, a single street, a single house, a single individual of it, for just one single half-hour, without feeling all over to his very heart convinced, that not all the countries of the old world put together are worthy to compare, in any one respect, from the very greatest to the very least, with the free-born, the free-bred, the immortal, and ten hundred thousand times more glorious country, generally called that of the ‘ Stars and the Stripes ! ’ The country of the

Stars and the Stripes is, in fact, and beyond all reach of contradiction, the finest country in the whole world, and the simple truth is, that nobody who really knows any thing about it, can ever think of calling it any thing else. It is just the biggest and the best, and that is saying every thing in two words.”

“Admirable!” exclaimed Mrs. Beauchamp, raising her fine eyes towards heaven, and then pressing her pocket-handkerchief to them, in a manner that plainly showed the profound sensibility with which she listened to praise so justly due, and so warmly uttered upon the merits of her beloved country. “Oh, it is admirable!”

“Admirable? It is first-rate, ma’am,” said the Honourable Judge Johnson, warmly. “I expect, madam,” he added, turning towards Mrs. Allen Barnaby, “I expect that nobody has yet come among us so elegantly well qualified as yourself for doing the justice that you promise us. I do not mean to speak alone of your particular great talents and beautiful accomplishments in writing, but I guess that it is because you have moved in the very highest of circles yourself that you are more up to the compre-

hending and admiring every thing you have found here, than any of the low, whipper-snapper people as have come before you. That is what I guess to be the reason, and true cause of the difference."

"You do me but justice, my dear sir," replied Mrs. Allen Barnaby, with an air that might justly be called majestically modest, "you do me but justice in supposing that I am, rather-out-of-the-common-way-capable of appreciating what is noble and superior. Heaven knows that I have no very great liking or partiality to the ways and manners of my own country; but yet in justice to myself I think it but right to mention that my very last visit in London was to the drawing-room of the Queen. I must beg and entreat that I may not be misunderstood in saying this, and that none of this charming company will suppose for an instant that I think over-much about queens and kings, and those sort of people. Nobody, I am sure, can be farther from it than I am; but nevertheless, I just mention this to prove that the Honourable Judge Johnson is right, and quite correct in what he has been pleased to say about my being

capable of judging; and I do believe most truly that the reason why so much, as I am told, has been said about the backwardness in elegance of this most great and glorious country is, that all the people who have come over here before are of an inferior class, and not used so much to the very first circles, as I confess I have been."

"Then the murder's out, and that's the truth of it," exclaimed Colonel Wingrove, a member of Congress and a man of fashion, who was one of Mrs. Carmichael's boarders. "All I wanted was to hear some of the English confess it themselves, for it is exactly what I have said a thousand and a thousand times; and it is astonishing to me that common sense has not pointed that out to every body, long, and long ago. For doesn't it stand to reason that we know what we are our own selves? Who is there, I should alike to be told, so capable of judging what our manners are, as the first-rate educated among ourselves? And yet people among us, as ought to know better, are for ever fretting and fuming because half-a-dozen vulgar low-borns, who never knew the elegant luxury of owning a score

of slaves to wait upon 'em, have come and gone without having the wit to find out what we really are. For my part I snap my fingers at them all," continued the gallant colonel, suiting the action to the word, "and so I ever have done. But that's no hindrance to my feeling a true respect for the real lady that is come amongst us now; and I beg pardon for interrupting her so long; and beg to conclude by saying that she may count upon being valued and approved as she deserves to be, for there is not a people upon the whole earth that knows more thoroughly what's what than the citizens of the United States."

Here Colonel Wingrove ceased speaking, and expectorated, while the Honourable Judge Johnson bowed to him with the condescension of a man who knows himself to be the first person in the company.

"What you have spoken, Colonel Wingrove, Sir, is of a piece with the good sense which we all know you give out in Congress, and which is just what in course we all expect from you. But now it strikes me that it is time for Mrs. Allen Barnaby to begin again; though it may be

that she would find a drink of lemonade preferable in the first instance; for this glorious, fine climate of ours is most times found rather over hot by strangers from northernmost countries, especially if, as in the present case, they happen to be in a room full of company."

Mrs. Carmichael immediately obeyed this hint by clapping her hands; upon which Cleopatra and her younger sister Cloe, who were both in waiting on the outside of the open door, started forward, and lemonade and whisky were very liberally handed round to the numerous circle.

"Now then, honoured madam," said the Judge, "may we take the liberty of asking you to progress in your agreeable reading?"

Mrs. Allen Barnaby bowed and immediately proceeded.

"If there is one point that is calculated to strike a reasonable stranger, altogether free from vulgar prejudice, more strongly than any other, at first arriving in this favoured and immortal country, it certainly is the contemplation of the comfort and happiness arising from the institution of slavery."

“God bless my soul!” cried Colonel Beauchamp, roused from his usual apathetic indolence by these stirring words, “that’s one of the finest sentences that I ever listened to, either in or out of congress, and I don’t care who hears me say it.”

“Nobody can hear you say it, Sir,” remarked the mild-looking George Gregory, “without agreeing in your judgment; unless indeed we were so unhappy as to have among us some desperately malignant Pennsylvanian, or canting Bostonian, or the like, traitors to their country and to common sense. None other can fail to agree with you in thinking that the last passage read to us by this truly superior lady is a proof of the greatest triumph of sound judgment over canting prejudice (coming as it does from an Englishwoman) that has perhaps ever been met with. And deeply indeed, madam, ought we to value it, for seldom is it, I grieve to say, that any writers whatever, except among the poor persecuted planters themselves, are ever found to have honest courage enough to speak out boldly *in print* in favour of this truly Roman and magnificent institution. But there is one word, one

little word, my dear lady, that it will be necessary to insert before your admirable work is sent to the press. Will you give me leave to suggest it?"

"There is nothing, Sir," replied Mrs. Allen Barnaby, with mingled gentleness and dignity, "there is nothing for which I should feel myself so deeply grateful as for any suggestions, whether in the way of additions or alterations, to this work, which perhaps I have been only too eager to begin. I am well aware that I must in all probability appear hasty; but my earnest wish—"

"Not a bit, not a bit too hasty, madam," exclaimed the Honourable Judge Johnson, interrupting her. "I honour you for your eagerness, madam; and it is never too soon to begin doing what is right. As to suggestions now and then, in the way of addition, you are much too smart a lady not to feel the advantage of it; but I protest that in the way of alteration I don't see the slightest chance of its being called for, or in any way necessary. All we have ever asked of those who came over to enjoy our good things, and take a spice, as I may say, of the elegance

and luxury in which we live, all we ask of them is, that when they sit down after going back, to write a book about what they have seen, they should just speak the truth, without fear or favour, and say honestly that the United States of America stand just first and foremost, and highest and noblest, among all the nations of the earth. That's all we want or wish for, from any author, male or female, gentle or simple; and by all I can understand from what this excellent good lady has read to us, of her commencement," he added, looking round upon the listening circle, "this is pretty much the upshot of what she means to report herself."

"Upon my word, Sir," said Mrs. Allen Barnaby, with a very amiable smile, "I do not and cannot see how it is possible, setting aside, of course, all sorts of wicked prejudice, envy, and the like, I really do not see how it is possible to say any thing else."

"I wish it was possible for me to say, madam, that there were many such ladies in the world as you are," replied the Judge. "I reckon that in that case we wouldn't care no more for the boundary question than for a flea-bite; and for

that matter, indeed, if just that much was granted us—the slavery boggle, you know, of course included—I really and truly don't think that the right of search itself would be thought any great deal of long. But now let us hear what it was that General Gregory was meaning by his alteration?"

"Hardly an alteration, judge, hardly an alteration," returned the bland old gentleman; "what I ask for is merely the insertion of a word or two. When the lady speaks of the agreeable impression which the sight of slavery makes on superior-minded people on their first arriving in the United States, she must, I think, so far particularize as to make it clear that she speaks of the feelings which would arise in case the stranger should be fortunate enough to come, as the lady herself did, to a slave-holding state in the first instance; for if, instead of that, the person arriving was to make their first acquaintance with the Union at Boston, now, for instance, it is likely enough that they would never dream of such a thing as slavery at all, and then in course it follows that they could not admire it."

“I understand, sir, I understand perfectly,” said the intelligent Mrs. Allen Barnaby, “you are quite right! The sentence as it now stands is exceedingly imperfect, but if any gentleman will be good enough to lend me a pencil for a moment I will correct it.”

A most surprising number of pencils and pencil-cases seemed to spring, as it were, almost spontaneously from the waistcoat-pockets of the surrounding gentlemen. On seeing which the authoress threw around her a smile most safely circular, and took with admirable tact the pencil that was nearest. Well indeed might it have been said of her on this occasion,

“Oft she rejects, but never once offends,”

for among all the pencil-holders who had to return their unaccepted offerings to the receptacles from whence they were drawn, not one of them, so admirable had been Mrs. Allen Barnaby's manner of getting out of the scrape, felt in the slightest degree offended.

It took, of course, a few minutes to reconstruct the defective sentence, and during this interval there was scarcely a gentleman present

who did not raise his voice to join in what might truly have been called a chorus of praise and admiration. Mrs. Allen Barnaby heard, and wrote, and smiled, and wrote again, and much sooner than under these fluttering and flattering circumstances could have been expected, she once more pushed back her curls, and prepared to read. In a moment every other voice was hushed, and she thus resumed :

“ If there is one point that is calculated to strike a reasonable stranger, altogether free from vulgar prejudice, and arriving for the first time in that most highly-favoured portion of the United States distinguished by the high privilege which was sanctioned by the immortal Washington, and by the illustrious Jefferson — approved ” — (a splendid phrase that she had written down from the lips of Mrs. Beauchamp) — “ it certainly is the contemplation of the comfort and happiness arising from the institution of slavery.”

“ Now then,” said the still wide-awake Colonel Beauchamp, “ now then I think, madam, that you might challenge all the authors that ever wrote, to show a sentence more full of

truth and wisdom than that is. I am sure, madam, we can never thank you enough ; and I, for one, beg to say that as long as it is suitable to your convenience and pleasure to continue in the Union, my house and home shall be open to you and yours, and that nothing that I and my family can do, shall be wanting to make you feel yourself as if you were a real born American."

A vast number of voices immediately reiterated nearly the same words : and while this was going on, Mr. Egerton once more ventured to look in the face of Annie. It was, however, no longer a frown that he met there, neither did any angry glow remain upon her brow. She was, indeed, on the contrary, unusually pale, and he fancied, although she did not raise her eyes, that there were tears in them, for their long dark lashes hung heavily, like the fringe of a cypress-branch besprinkled with dew, upon her alabaster cheek. But although Annie did not raise her eyes when the young Englishman turned to look at her, it is possible that she was conscious of his doing so ; for in the next moment she had risen from her chair, glided over

the space which divided her from the window, and stepped through it upon the balcony.

Not many men of any age can see a very beautiful young girl in tears without experiencing some kindly softening of the heart towards them ; but at three or four and twenty, this sort of softness is usually too powerful in its influence to permit, for the moment at least, the continuance of any harsh or hostile feeling ; and certainly Mr. Egerton just then quite forgot the perfect Americanism of Annie Beauchamp. But what was stranger still, though he very greatly wished to follow her, he had not the courage or confidence to do it ; but though, upon reaching the balcony, she contrived so to place herself as not to be seen by either him or by any one else in the room, he was so much occupied by the image of her pale, sad, lovely face as she went out, that he lost whatever advantage of any kind might have been gained by attending to what was going on in the saloon ; for he did not distinctly hear another word.

Pleasantly conscious as Mrs. Allen Barnaby was of her great powers, as well in her new occupation of writing a book, as in every thing

else, she had nevertheless found, after the first sentence or two, that the putting together the fine phrases which have been given above, was likely to be a very great bore ; and, to say the truth, when she left off it was because she really did not know what she should say next. It was then that the happy idea of writing down a few questions, to be answered either by her inspiring muse, Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp, or by some one else of the high-standers whose favour she was so anxious to propitiate, occurred to her. And now it stood her in excellent good stead ; for when, upon the subsiding of the burst of grateful and hospitable feeling just described, the Honourable Judge Johnson raised his voice to request that she would continue, instead of having to make the blank reply of,

“ Sir, I have got no more,” she was able to answer, in a tone, that instead of damping, very greatly increased the interest she had already awakened.

“ Now then, my most kind and indulgent hearers,” she said, “ I have a great, a very great favour to ask of you ;” and Mrs. Allen Barnaby drew forth, from amidst the papers which she

had placed upon the table, the sheet upon which she had written her "questions."

"I have here," she resumed, "put down one or two inquiries which strike me as being very important, and in which I hope and trust my excellent friends here assembled, will be kind enough to give me some information."

"Assuredly, madam, assuredly!" answered three or four voices at once. "Please to read the inquiries, madam, only please to read them, that's all."

Mrs. Allen Barnaby obeyed, and in her most sonorous and impressive accents read,

"In what manner does the republican form of government appear to affect the social habits of the people?"

It was her intention to have gone through her whole string of questions, before she paused to invite discussion on them. But this was impossible. You might have fancied yourself in the chamber of congress at Washington, so eager did every honourable member appear to speak on the subject now offered for discussion. But by force of lungs, and the impetus given to his determination to be heard, by the conscious-

ness that he was the richest man in the company, it was the Honourable Judge Johnson who finally succeeded in becoming spokesman on the occasion.

“ In what manner ? Gracious Heaven ! my dearest lady, in every manner ! The republican form of government is just all in all ; without it, you may take my word for it, we should not be a bit better, or a bit wiser, or a bit more advanced than other people. It is the republican form of government that makes us the citizens, the statesmen, the philosophers, and the rich men that we are. It is to the republican form of government that we owe our immense superiority in all ways ; it is that which makes us such fathers and husbands as we are. It is that which makes us feared abroad, and adored at home ; and to end all, it is that which makes us great ; it is that which makes us glorious : in one word, it is that which makes us the greatest nation upon the earth, and it is that which will keep us so.”

While this was spoken, Mrs. Allen Barnaby sat the very picture of mute and earnest attention. Her ear seemed to gather the sounds she heard, as a miser might gather gold ; and

her mind, showing itself through her intelligent eye, appeared already setting to work, in order to form it into implements both of use and ornament, such as might be scattered over the whole earth, sure to become the most precious treasures of every land they reached.

When at length the Judge stopped to take breath, the listening lady rose from her seat, and laying her hand upon her breast said, in a manner that very greatly touched her hearers,

“ Never can the impressive words I have now heard escape from my memory! It was my intention to have written down whatever information I might have been happy enough to obtain in reply to my questions—but for this one, the answer is engraven *HERE*.”

It is hardly necessary to narrate how these words were received. Cold indeed must be the heart that cannot imagine it! When tranquillity was again restored, Mrs. Allen Barnaby, who had reseated herself, during the moments wherein she had yielded herself as it were, to applause, once more took up her paper and read.

“ How far does the absence of a national

form of worship produce the results anticipated from it?"

"Oh, that's answered in half a word, madam," resumed the Judge, who seemed to consider himself the chairman of the committee, sitting to decide upon the lady's questions. "It just answers as we intended—and that's enough. We knew beforehand that it would never do for such a people as us, to be schooling of one another for everlasting about forms, and doctrines, and the old one knows what. You may just set down on that bit of the constitution, that it works perfect. And now, if you please, you may go on to the next."

"At what degree of elevation may the education of the ladies of the Union be considered to stand, when compared to that received by the females of other countries?"

"Oh, my!"

"Well now!"

"Isn't that capital?"

"I expect that one and all we ladies must answer that for ourselves," were words, which, like winged messengers seemed flying round Mrs. Allen Barnaby in all directions; but hap-

pily in a tone which showed that if the ladies *were* called upon to speak for themselves, it was a call to which they should have no objection to answer.

“ You may say that, ladies !” said Colonel Wingrove, gaily and politely winking at the most eager speakers ; “ nobody can answer that question, I expect, as well as your own pretty selves. But if I was obliged to say my say on the subject, I know that it would just be to declare, that the gals of the Union beat all creation—not in anywise to mention all the other women in it ; and that they do, out and out, and out again, ten millions of times over, in every sort of learning and gentility, as much as they do in beauty.”

This gallant speech was received with a regular clapping of hands from all the gentlemen present, while the “ gals” simpered and tittered, and smirked, and brought their heads together in little whispering knots, till at length one very young lady’s voice was distinctly heard to say,

“ Well now, I do hope that she will write down that exactly, without changing a word.”

“ And so I will, my dear young lady,” cried

Mrs. Allen Barnaby, affectionately; “and my heart dilates with pleasure as I look around me, and think of the happy chance by which I have been called upon to do justice to such lovely and elegant creatures as I see here!”

“Very prettily said, ma’am,” said General Gregory, with his usual kind smile, “and I must observe that we have a right too, to talk of our own good fortune, that has brought us so altogether genteel and understanding a lady to write about us, as yourself.”

“There is nobody to be found, I expect, general, who will be ready to gainsay that word,” said the Honourable Judge Johnson. “And now I shall give my vote and interest for our being all silent, while this excellent lady goes on with her questions. Now then, ma’am, we are all mum.”

“I have but one, or rather I should say that I have but two questions more on my list at present,” said Mrs. Allen Barnaby. “I say two, because I perceive that I have divided the subject under two distinct heads; but if you will give me leave, I will read them both together, as being too intimately connected for division;

and if I mistake not, gentlemen, you will feel the subject to be one of very great importance, and of a nature to require the very best and most correct information before I can venture to write upon it."

"In what manner was slavery originally instituted? And what are its real effects, both on the white and the black population?"

Scarcely had Mrs. Allen Barnaby pronounced these words, when so many voices were raised to answer her, that for some minutes nothing could be heard distinctly.

"This will never do, gentlemen," cried the Judge, raising his powerful voice to its very highest pitch, "we are one and all interested in this question, or the devil's in it. But if you all keep on jabbering together at this infernal rate, just like so many wild geese, when they are settling down upon a common, I should like to know how the lady is to understand rightly a single word you say? I don't want, or wish, to put myself forward, excepting in fit time and season; but I expect there is no one here that will attempt to deny that the advocacy of my principles upon this subject in congress, has

done something towards startling the New Englanders off from their infernal abolition nonsense; and if so, I think it is but fair to give me a try, as to whether I can't startle the Old Englanders a little, too. What d'ye say, gentlemen? Are you willing to let me answer the lady, or are you not?"

However much many of the individuals present might have desired to hear themselves speak a little on this very favourite theme, a very decided majority made it understood that they were willing to accept the Honourable Judge Johnson as their substitute; and no sooner was this made perfectly clear and silence obtained, than the judge rose up, and putting himself in the attitude in which he always addressed the members of congress, he thus spoke:

"As to the first member of your requirement, my good lady, I will just take the liberty of saying that you may go to your Bible for an answer. And if you don't exactly know where to look for it, there is that excellent pious Christian, the lady of General Gregory, will show you; for she has got it all at her fingers' ends about Cain being turned black by the

hand of the Lord, on purpose that he might become the father of a nation of blackymore nigger slaves: and that's the top and head of the institution, as I take it. However, I will leave that part of the subject to her, because it is well known to every body in our part of the country, that there is no one, be he priest, parson, or prelate, that understands it better. But I will take upon me, in my own person, to make a reply to the other portion of your inquiry, that being altogether in my own way, and touching direct upon points, whereon my principles have been pretty generally received in congress, as standard principles of the wealthiest, the most enlightened, and in all ways the most important, portion of the Union."

The Honourable Judge here paused for a moment, spit, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, and then proceeded,

"As to the effect of slavery upon the white part of the population, as that is the way in which you have been pleased to put your question, my good lady, whereas we should say, as to its effect upon the *masters*, it is altogether a matter too clear to admit of any mistake.

“In the first place, it makes the only real gentlemen in the Union. In the second place, it saves the finest people upon God’s earth from the abominable degradation of having no servants, proper and fitting, as regular servants, to wait upon them. Thirdly, slavery is known on all sides to be the only way in which the glorious fine sun and soil of this noblest of all countries, can be turned to the best account. Fourthly, there is no other way that man can invest, by which such fortunes can be made in the Union, as may enable some among the free-born of our glorious citizens and immortal republic to keep up the credit of the country, both at home and abroad, in such a way as to give us proper dignity in the eyes of Europe. And now, madam, I will leave off speaking upon this head for the present, because I calculate that I have said about as much as you will be able to remember at one go; but I have got not less than fifty-seven reasons altogether, which I can bring forward, when you are ready for them, to support my principles, but with which I will not now charge your memory, in the fear that you might not remember them all clearly. But

this signifies the less, because it is proper, madam, that you keep in mind the necessity of coming again upon this part of your subject, it being greatly beyond all comparison, the most important of all. As to your other question, about the niggers themselves, poor filthy varment, it is vastly easy to answer it. Just state, if you please, my good lady, (saying, as you safely may, that it is upon the best possible authority), just state that if, for many excellent reasons, the gentlemen planters had not thought it advisable to take these poor wretches under their protection by making regular lawful slaves of them, so that they cannot, luckily for them, get away,—if it was not for this, you will be pleased to say, that it is satisfactorily proved by all the philosophers as have examined the subject, that they would, beyond all question, in a very few years be found running about in the forests on all fours, just like any other beasts—unless, indeed, as some think would have been the case, they would come to an end by eating one another up. } This, my dear lady, is what we have saved them from, and this is what ought to be put forward before the eyes of all Europe.”

“AND SO IT SHALL, SIR,” said Mrs. Allen Barnaby, again rising with an air of indescribable dignity. “Blind, indeed, must those be, who cannot see the light, when it is thus admirably put before them !”

“Madam ! you are a thorough lady,” replied the Judge, with a low bow. “And now I put the question, whether we should not be the better for a little more of good Mrs. Carmichael’s lemonade for the ladies, and whisky for the gentlemen ? And then to my judgment, it would be most convenient that we should not remain much longer—there being much desirability in our taking ourselves off before this good lady shall have lost out of her head all that I have been endeavouring to put in it.”

CHAPTER IV.

Mrs. Allen Barnaby receives numerous notes of invitation—Specimens of the *soirée*—Their effect on Mrs. Allen Barnaby—She falls asleep and has a vision.

BEFORE twelve o'clock next day, Mrs. Allen Barnaby had received fifteen notes of invitation for herself, her family, and friends. Some of these were for dinner and evening parties at New Orleans, and some for visits of longer duration, which the distinguished travellers were entreated to make at the hospitable dwellings of the writers, during the progress of their proposed tour. To copy all these documents is unnecessary, as the same hospitable and patriotic spirit appeared to pervade them all; but one or two ought to be given, in justice to the eloquence with which these feelings were expressed. The following are selected without

the slightest partiality of any kind, except what arises from feeling that they are peculiarly well calculated to serve as specimens of the whole.

No. I.

“ Madam,

“ Much has been said, a great deal too much, upon the deficiency of mutual good-liking between the great and glorious Union of America, and the Islands of Great Britain. You, madam, shall prove in your own person, that as far as the noble-hearted citizens of the United States are concerned, the charge is altogether false and unfounded. Mrs. Major Wigs and myself, desire the pleasure and satisfaction—You may observe as a national trait, if you please, madam, that in addressing the natives of Great Britain, the citizens of the United States never talk of “doing honour,” and that sort of nonsense, and when you, madam, have seen a little more of them, you will become aware (for your capacity is already proved to be of the best) that they don’t stand in a situation for any mortal creature on God’s earth to do them an honour.—But to return to

business; Major Wigs and his lady hereby request the pleasure of your company, together with your husband, in course, and all your travelling companions inclusive, to a ball and supper at their house and plantation, called the Levée Lodge, just two miles off New Orleans, this day week.

“ I remain, madam,

“ With the utmost of respect,

“ For your individual elegance of mind,

“ CORNELIUS ALEXANDER WIGS.”

No II.

“ Much esteemed Lady,

“ After what was read and heard in Mrs. Carmichael’s keeping-room last night, I expect it is not very needful for me to say why it is that I and my lady, Mrs. Colonel Staggars, desire your further acquaintance—we being amongst those who, acting in conformity with all reasonable laws, human and divine, do the best that in us lies, as in duty bound, to uphold and support the greatly misunderstood and much wrongly abused institution of slavery. You will understand therefore, madam, without

more said, why it comes that we so entirely approve the superior elegance of the literature which was displayed to us last night. And this brings me to the point and purpose of this present writing, which is to give you an invitation, and your good family all of them with you, to a grand dinner party which it is my intention to give in your favour on the 19th inst., at five o'clock, P.M.

“ I am, respected Lady,

“ Your literary admirer,

“ MICHAEL ANGELO JEFFERSON STAGGERS.”

No. III.

“ The Honourable Mrs. Secretary Vondonderhoft, presents her gratified compliments to the highly-gifted and superior-minded Mrs. Allen Barnaby, and in conjunction with her husband, the Honourable Mr. Secretary Vondonderhoft, requests the pleasure of Mrs. Allen Barnaby's favouring company, together with that of the party supposed to belong to her, to an evening *soirée*, when the Honourable Mrs. Secretary Vondonderhoft will have the advantage of presenting Mrs. Allen Barnaby to a great

number of her friends of the most first-rate standing and consideration, which she flatters herself may be a gratification, and every way an advantage to Mrs. Allen Barnaby. The evening fixed for the Honourable Mrs. Secretary Vondonderhofs *soirée* is next Monday week."

No. IV.

" Madam,

" Your purpose is as noble as are the talents which Heaven appears to have given you for the means of effecting it. I respect you as you deserve, Mrs. Allen Barnaby, and in saying this it seems, madam, to me, that I say every thing. Myself and Mrs. Governor Tapway will consider it as a pleasure to receive you at our plantation mansion, on the banks of Crocodile Creek, for as long a time as you and your friends can make it convenient to bide with us, my wish being to show, for the assistance of your writing, that any unagreeable feeling which may have been seen visible in the United States of North America, towards those that

come travelling and spying from the old country, have arisen wholly and altogether from the too certain fact of knowing that we were going to be faulted and abused; whereas you, madam, being altogether upon a new lay, in the descriptive line, may look in like manner of novelty altogether for a different style of conduct on our part; and I have no doubt but that you and yours will be satisfied with the same.

“ I remain, madam,

“ Your true admirer

“ And sincere success wisher,

“ STEPHEN ORLANDO BONES TAPWAY.”

Besides these, which I have taken the trouble to transcribe on account of their peculiar graces of style, Mrs. Allen Barnaby received no less than eleven other letters in the course of the morning which followed the triumphant exhibition of her powers as an author; all of them bearing the strongest testimonies of admiration and esteem, and all conveying very earnest invitations, of one sort or another, both to herself and the ladies and gentlemen in her train.

On receiving the first of these very gratifying testimonials, Mrs. Allen Barnaby, her cheek flushed, and her eyes sparkling with all sorts of gratified feelings, rose hastily from the easy-chair in her own apartment, in which she chanced to be reposing when it arrived, and was just going to look for her daughter and "the Perkinses," in order to share her pleasure and her triumph with them, when a second was delivered to her by the grinning Cleopatra. She returned, of course, to her chair, that she might peruse it undisturbed, and then her purpose changed, and it was to Mrs. Beauchamp that she determined first to display these trophies of success. Again, therefore, she stepped forward, and again her steps were arrested by Cleopatra, who now brought no less than three letters in her hand at once; and so struck was the black messenger herself at this extraordinary influx of despatches, that having laid down the three letters, she stood stock still in front of the table, to see how the English lady looked while she was a reading of them. But Mrs. Allen Barnaby was by this time in a frame of mind which rendered such examination extremely an-

noying to her, and raising her voice and her hand so as to command both respect and obedience, she said—

“Leave me, girl! Leave me, I tell you! Leave me instantly!”

Poor Cleopatra liked not the voice much, but she liked the hand less still; for not having the slightest doubt but that it was to be employed in the way in which raised hands always are employed towards people of her complexion in Louisiana, she actually quivered from top to toe, for Mrs. Allen Barnaby's hand was not a small one. Uttering therefore only the monosyllable “OH!” in reply, she left the room much more rapidly than she entered it, and the lady was left in her secret bower to enjoy unlooked at, and alone, all the delicious triumph of that happy hour.

She read and re-read the five notes, which now lay all opened wide upon the table before her, and then she sat for a few moments in motionless and silent reverie. At length, however, her features relaxed into a smile, and she exclaimed aloud—

“I wonder what would happen if I were to

take into my head to make myself a queen? I wonder whether anybody, or anything, would be found able to stop me? I'll be hanged if I believe there would. However, I don't mean to try my hand at it just at present, because I don't believe I could enjoy it more if I was ten times a queen than I do now, seeing all those people who own themselves that they have always hated us English like poison, seeing them all ready to fall down and worship me, just because it came into my head to think that I should find it answer to make myself popular! And answer it does, or the deuce is in it. Why we might one and all of us live at free quarters for a twelvemonth at this rate; and I shall take care to make the Perkinses understand that they are to pay *me*, if they pay nobody else. That is but fair and honest. And if they don't plague me in any way I will let them have a good bargain. What will the major say to me, I wonder, now?"

And here Mrs. Allen Barnaby almost laughed aloud in her exceeding glee. But she was not left long to enjoy in tranquillity this first full evidence of her complete success, for another

slave, and not the terrified Cleopatra, soon entered her room, and deposited three more notes before her ; and again, after another short interval the same black girl returned, her enormous eyes grown more enormous still by wondering at the business she was about, and laid down four more, and in less than five minutes after she entered with three, thus completing the fifteen, which seemed to terminate the embassies for the time being.

To say that Mrs. Allen Barnaby felt and looked delighted as she thus sat surrounded by these white-winged messengers of fame, would be an expression so pitifully and unsatisfactorily weak, that I forbear to use it. But where may I look for words capable of expressing aptly and fully the state of mind into which she was thrown by this enthusiastic outpouring of patriotic gratitude ? Look where I will, I shall find none such. It is in fact impossible for any faculty, or faculties, save imagination alone, to do justice to her emotions, and to the imagination of my readers I resign the task, though only too well aware that of these, not above one in five hundred can be expected to possess the

faculty in sufficient vigour to do justice to the image I have suggested.

Never, in truth, was there a mind more calculated to enjoy such success than that of my heroine. There are many who, though they may relish fame with tolerable keenness in general, would feel no great exaltation of spirit at this species of it in particular. But Mrs. Allen Barnaby was not one of these. Neither could she, notwithstanding her well satisfied contemplations on her past life, be classed with those so *blasés* with distinction and renown, as to make the receiving it a matter of indifference. Nor did the shower of happiness which so delightfully bathed her spirit in this hour of joy, bring empty praise alone ; on the contrary, a vast deal of very solid-seeming pudding appeared coming with it ; and in short, Mrs. Allen Barnaby felt her contentment to be so measureless, and so greatly too big for utterance, that she suddenly determined not to mention what had happened to any one till she had first enjoyed it for a little while in secret, and till she felt capable of conversing upon it with less external emotion than she was at present con-

scious must betray itself were she to enter upon the subject immediately with any one—unless, indeed, it were her lawful husband and partner of her greatness.

“I will lie down!” she murmured to herself, as she passed her pocket-handkerchief across her forehead, “I will darken the room and lie down.”

She fastened the blinds, and drew the window curtains accordingly; and then, having laid aside a considerable portion of her apparel, she crept within her mosquito-net, and laid her throbbing head upon her pillow. There is something in the climate of New Orleans which tends so strongly to induce sleep, that probably no degree of happiness could enable any person long to resist it if they indulged in the attitude which Mrs. Allen Barnaby had now taken. Certain it is that many minutes had not elapsed after my heroine had disposed of herself in the manner I have described before her eyes closed, and her regular but heavy breathing proclaimed aloud that she slept. But oh! what a sleep was that! and how far unlike the dull oblivion that falls upon ordinary spirits while the “sweet

restorer" is doing his work upon them! No sooner had she forgotten herself, as the common and unphilosophical phrase expresses it — no sooner had she forgotten herself, than a power nobler than memory took its place. Mrs. Allen Barnaby did *not* forget herself, though it was less by memory than by prophecy, that she became in sleep the subject of her own high imaginings. It was probably from the more than common intensity of the emotions which produced these sleeping visions, that she at once gave birth to them in words, and with perfect distinctness exclaimed—

"Pray, move out of the way, Louisa! Do you not see how all those good people are straining and striving to get a glimpse of me. Matilda! it is quite ill-natured to keep standing so exactly before me. It is quite contrary to my temper and disposition to torment people so. Oh, yes, certainly," she continued, varying her tone, as if speaking courteously to some stranger, "yes, certainly, my lord. If you will just push that golden inkstand a little nearer to me I will give you an autograph immediately."

For a moment or two she was silent, and

then turning as it were impatiently on her bed, she resumed, in accents less bland,

“It is nonsense, Donny, to think of it. It is not *you* who have written all these books; and if, as you all justly enough say, a title must and will be given, as in the case of Sir Walter and Sir Edward, it cannot be given to *you*. No, Donny, no. It must and will be given to *ME*. Yes, yes; hush, hush, hush. I know it, I know it. I know perfectly well, Major Allen, without your telling me, that no ladies ever are made baronets. I know I can’t be Sir Martha, foolish man, quite as well as you do, and I know a little better perhaps that *you* will never be Sir any thing. But if my country wishes to reward me by a title, to which I should have no objection whatever, if such be the will of my sovereign, if that, as you all seem to suppose, should really be the case, I see neither difficulty nor objection in it. Why should I not be called Lady Martha?” and then she murmured on till her voice sank into silence, and herself into sounder sleep, “Lady Martha Allen Barnaby—Lady Martha Allen Barnaby—Lady Allen Martha Bar—”

It was clearly evident that my heroine had positively exhausted herself by the vehemence of her emotions, even in sleep, for she now snored heavily for above two hours, without again moving a limb, and on awakening, experienced that feeling of puzzle and confusion of intellect which often follows sleep that has been unusually profound.

“Where am I?” she exclaimed, starting up, and looking very wildly round her. But most sweet was the return of consciousness which followed. She saw the mass of open notes all lying together upon her table. “Is it then possible?” she exclaimed; “is it indeed true, and not merely the invention of a dream? Am I really at this moment the most distinguished person in New Orleans? And what may I not hope for hereafter? But, mercy on me! I really must keep myself quiet, or I shall certainly go distracted.”

The resolution was a wise one, and kept to better than might have been expected from the very animated and excitable nature of Mrs. Allen Barnaby. She looked at her watch, and perceived that it was fully time to begin preparing

her dress for dinner, and she set about this necessary business with a deliberate steadiness, which showed her determined to keep herself and her nerves quiet and composed. The result of this was all that she herself wished it should be. Her ringlets, her rouge, her flowers, and her bows, all took their respective places, without any trace of that confusion of arrangement which might reasonably enough have been feared under the existing circumstances. Before her dress had received its last finishing touch by the arrangement of her white blonde scarf, she heard the approaching step of the major, and smiled, but very sedately, as she cast her eyes upon the letter-covered table.

“Pour out some water for me, there’s a good soul,” said the unconscious husband of the most distinguished person in New Orleans; “I’m devilish late, I believe.”

“There is no occasion to put yourself into such a prodigious bustle if you are,” returned his lady, with an air of very elegant langour. “The dinner must be kept back a little if we are not ready for it.”

“Keep back! Keep back the dinner at an

American boarding-house ! I should have thought, my dear, that you had been here quite long enough to know that wouldn't answer. Did you ever see any one of them waited for half a second, even among the oldest customers like the Beauchamps, or any of them ?”

“ I beg your pardon, major, but I cannot exactly think it the same thing. Nobody, I imagine, would like to sit down till—till *we* were ready.”

The major opened his eyes, but was too busy in adjusting his cravat to remove them from the looking-glass, and Mrs. Allen Barnaby was really too much afraid of shaking her equanimity to trust her voice in explanation. But when, his hasty reparation of himself being completed, he turned about and looked towards his wife, who had quietly seated herself at the table, he perceived the large number of open letters with which it was covered, and immediately uttered the expected question,

“ What in the world are all those letters, wife ?”

“ You may read them, Major Allen Barnaby, if you wish it,” she meekly replied, while quietly

employing herself in securing the clasp of her waist-ribbon.

The major, accepting the permission thus given, immediately set himself to the task of examination, but had proceeded but a very little way in it, when he gaily exclaimed,

“ Well done, my Barnaby ! Egad we are afloat now, or the devil’s in it.”

And assuring himself by a hasty glance through the remainder that they were all in the same agreeable strain, he actually walked round the table and kissed the illustrious fair one to whom they were addressed, taking the greatest care, however, to disturb neither her ringlets nor her rouge.

“ I am proud of you, Mrs. Allen Barnaby, I am, upon my soul,” he said ; “ and what think you, my dear, will be the best way to profit by all this ? Why here are no less than nine invitations for staying visits at different country seats. If we could but find out, wife, who amongst them enjoys a little piquet, you know, like Colonel Beauchamp, and who does not, we could manage our matters famously. It would be fun, wouldn’t it, to be going from house to house,

treated and feasted ! you writing your immortal books, and I raking in dollars every night of my life, and our own money lying snug all the time ? It would be famous fun, wouldn't it ?”

“ Why, certainly the mode of life as you sketch it, major, would be pleasant enough, and profitable too, I dare say,” replied his lady, “ if we mind our hits properly. It will be exceedingly necessary, however, to find out who's who, and what's what, before we decide upon what to accept and what to refuse. I have said to all that I would send an answer, and this will give us a little time for inquiry.”

“ You are a jewel !” exclaimed the major, with a burst of really passionate admiration. “ But there goes the bell, my darling. After dinner you must write me down the names of all these excellent people, that I may learn what I can about them. And you may keep the letters, you know, and ask a few questions of Mrs. Beauchamp, or any body else who can answer them.”

“ I shall not be idle, my dear,” replied his wife, with a composed and quiet smile, which proved to her acute husband that she was not

quite in her usual state of mind ; but he was at that moment inclined to think that all moods became her, and taking his arm within hers, he led her with a very decided feeling of triumph, to the dinner-table.

CHAPTER V.

Mrs. Barnaby appears to the company at the boarding-house in the character of a full blown lion—Arrangements are made for encreasing her knowledge of the United States, by a tour—Another meeting between Mr. Egerton and Miss Beauchamp in the balcony.

THERE was a something in Mrs. Allen Barnaby's demeanour as she entered the dining-room, supported on the arm of her husband, which both attracted the attention of her particular friends among the company assembled there, and puzzled them.

“Was she ill?” “Was she affronted at somebody or something?” “Had she received disagreeable tidings from home?” or “was she only very much fatigued?” All and each of these motives suggested themselves to all those sufficiently interested in this lady to watch her

as she entered the room, despite the interesting nature of the business already going on at the top of the table, where Mrs. Carmichael, puffing and wheezing like a fainting steam-engine, was sending round by the sable hands of two negro Hebes, sharply scrutinized portions of a favourite fish. The equality or inequality of this nice and difficult distribution was, under ordinary circumstances, a matter of great moment, and nearly of universal interest; but now it was only partially so. Yet it would be difficult to describe precisely what it was in the bearing of Mrs. Allen Barnaby which caused this effect. She always walked in with a great deal of dignity, and so she did now. She had always some volant ribbon or floating scarf to attend to and arrange; and so she had now. She never failed to return with great benignity any salutations which she might receive as she moved onward to her place; nor did she fail to do so now. But in all this there was something that nobody had ever seen before; a blending of condescension and indifference; an eye that seemed not fully conscious of the identity of the objects over which it glanced; an air of superiority softened by benevolence; and, finally,

a look of gentle tenderness when she turned towards her husband, that seemed to indicate that she recognised in him a being who in some degree at least approached to an equality of condition with herself.

Having reached the chair now constantly reserved for her, next her friend Mrs. Beauchamp she placed herself in it with a sort of circular bow that seemed to say, "Pray do not disturb yourselves; but not even to that favoured lady did she give more than half a smile, and half a nod, accompanied with a languid look and drooping eyelid that seemed to speak exhaustion and fatigue.

"Oh my!" exclaimed her observant friend "if you an't regularly done up, Mrs. Allen Barnaby! God bless your dear heart! You have just been working too hard, that's quite plain and clear, and that won't do at all. We shall have you ill, by and by, if we don't take care, and then what is to come of our delightful tour? Take my advice, and desire your husband, the major, to send you a glass of his wine. Though I am sure, for the matter of that, Colonel Beauchamp would be first-rate happy to offer

you a taste of his, only gentlemen boarders are generally supposed to know their own lady's taste best. Haven't you been writing an unaccountable quantity to-day, Mrs. Allen Barnaby? Say."

Mrs. Allen Barnaby in reply to this question turned her benignant countenance upon her friend. There was a gentle and very charming smile upon it, but the eyes were considerably more than half closed, and for a few seconds she suffered herself to be looked at in silence; then she said, shaking her head, and smiling if possible with still more benignity,

"Oh no! You are quite mistaken, dear lady; I have not written a single line."

There was a look of blank disappointment on the countenance of Mrs. Beauchamp on hearing this, which recalled Mrs. Allen Barnaby to the necessity of not losing any birds already in her hand, while starting away to look after others which were still in the bush; she therefore so far recalled herself to the passing moment as to say,

"You look surprised, my dear Mrs. Beauchamp, and so you well may! But your surprise

would cease if you knew what a morning I had passed."

"Not sick, I hope?" returned her new friend with very sincere anxiety. "I'm sure I wouldn't have you take a spell of sickness just now for more than I'll say."

"You are very kind! Oh no! Not sick, or sorry, I assure you; only engaged, too incessantly occupied by a multitude of letters, to do any thing but read them."

"My! A mail from the old country, I expect?" replied Mrs. Beauchamp, with a sort of congratulatory smile.

"No," returned Mrs. Allen Barnaby composedly, "not so. All my letters were from ladies and gentlemen—mostly from gentlemen, indeed, who were here last night."

A visible augmentation of colour suffused the cheeks of Mrs. Beauchamp on hearing these words; an effect which was instantly and satisfactorily remarked by the authoress.

"They will be at fisticuffs about me soon, if I don't take care," thought she, "but it will be better for me to carry on every thing peaceably, and profit by them all in turn." And with this

feeling she smiled with more of peculiar and personal affection on Mrs. Beauchamp than she had done before, and said, "I must ask your advice and assistance about all this. In a society so particularly select and elegant, I would not for the world offend any body; but it is impossible to accept all these invitations, and you must help me to decide whom I must refuse."

"What's that about invitations, mamma?" demanded Madame Tornorino, who like the rest of the company had remarked something queer in her mother's looks, which now, with her inherited shrewdness, she thought might very likely be the result of more compliments and invitations. "I say, mamma," she resumed, "I beg you will let me know all the invites in time, for I hate to be taken at a hop, and so does the Don, too."

"Fear not, my love," replied her mother, with a tranquillizing nod, "I will always contrive to give you time enough for dressing. But upon my word, dear, I don't think I can promise to keep a regular calendar of all invitations, it would occupy more time than I can spare. But you may go into my room if you

like it, after dinner, and collect all the notes and letters which you will find lying about upon my table, and read them, if it will be any satisfaction to you."

"Ask if you may bring them all down into the drawing-room," whispered Miss Matilda Perkins across Don Tornorino, by whose side it was the pleasure of his young wife that her friend should always sit (thinking it, probably, more cozy and comfortable to keep their party thus far together, than to let any other lady sit next him, particularly "that odious Annie Beauchamp," whom she hated above all things, and towards whom she had more than once caught the beautiful eyes of her Don directed). "Oh, for goodness sake bring them down, my darling dearest Madame Tornorino!" reiterated her eager friend.

"Very well," was the reply. "Hold your tongue and say nothing about it. I shall bring them down if I like it, and ask no leave, you may depend upon it. I should have thought you might have guessed that without my telling you."

Mrs. Beauchamp who, though for very differ-

ent reasons, was quite as anxious about these invitations as Miss Matilda herself, ventured to ask a few questions of her new friend respecting the names of the parties from whence they came; to all of which Mrs. Allen Barnaby replied with *almost* her former affectionate warmth of manner,

“You shall see them all, my dear Mrs. Beauchamp. Don’t imagine for a moment that it is possible I could have any reserves with you! Oh no! we must talk them all over together.”

“Thank you very much,” replied the comforted Mrs. Beauchamp. “I certainly should like to see who comes forward first and foremost. I told you how it would be, didn’t I, Mrs. Allen Barnaby? You won’t forget that, I expect? Say.”

“No, indeed! I shall never forget the exceedingly kind and friendly manner in which you have conducted yourself towards me throughout, my dear madam. I shall not easily meet with any one whose society I shall enjoy so thoroughly as I do yours.”

There was some comfort in hearing this, but the words did not seem to mean exactly what

the same words would have meant yesterday—at least, so thought, or rather so felt, Mrs. Beauchamp. But yet, to do her justice, she did by no means fully enter into or understand the nature of the change she remarked. She thought, indeed, that it was likely enough Mrs. Allen Barnaby might like to listen to other first-rate patriotic ladies, as well as to her, and might wish to compare testimonies together in order to get at the exact truth; but for all the calculations which were going on as to whom she could turn to greatest profit in *other* ways, nothing of the kind ever entered her head. Neither did she long suffer the trifling difference which she had fancied perceptible in the illustrious lady's tone to dwell upon her mind.

“I ought to be ashamed of myself,” thought she, the moment afterwards, “for having any such fancies. As if we ought not, one and all, to think of the one great object of having justice done to our country; and there is no danger upon that score as long as this dear writing lady keeps clear of those wicked and rebellious free states that don't scruple to abuse our venerable institutions about slavery, just as bad, more

shame for them, as our foreign enemies themselves can do."

So the next time Mrs. Allen Barnaby gave her an opportunity of speaking to her again, which was not immediately—for to say truth that lady had in a great degree lost the comfort she might have found from Mrs. Carmichael's dinners in consequence of the immense importance she had hitherto attached to all that was said to her, and was now making amends to herself for it, by attending much more to the dinner, and much less to the conversation than heretofore. But as soon as she found an opportunity, Mrs. Beauchamp said,

"Do you happen, Mrs. Allen Barnaby, ma'am, to recollect any of the names of the gentlemen who have been writing to you? I can't say but what I should like to know who's come forward."

Mrs. Allen Barnaby, who had just completed the demolition of a very savoury plate, and had been reflecting during the pleasant process on the various words and phrases which had reached her since her arrival at New Orleans, relative to the first-rateness of standing of her already

well-secured friend, Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp, promptly replied, and in accents of perfectly recovered cordiality,

“My dearest friend! I have the very worst head in the world for names! Let me see—let me see—oh, yes, my dear Mrs. Beauchamp! there is one I remember perfectly; and the better, perhaps, because I received *two* notes so signed. Gregory is the name. Both General Gregory and Mrs. Gregory, wrote most obligingly, and very strongly urged our immediately paying them a visit at their place in the country.”

“Possible!” exclaimed Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp, and there stopped.

“Possible?” repeated Mrs. Allen Barnaby. “What does that mean, my dear friend? Do you doubt its being possible?”

“Oh my! no, Mrs. Allen Barnaby. No doubt of any thing you say could enter my thoughts, you may be very sure. Only to me, who so well know the general and his uncommon quietness upon all matters, leaving every thing to his wife, you know, and all that, it does seem something like a miracle, that he should

sit down and write an invitation, specially as his lady was doing the very same."

"It certainly shows a most amiable and cordial feeling of hospitality," replied Mrs. Allen Barnaby; "so much so, indeed, that I felt the moment I read their two letters, that it would be quite impossible to refuse the invitation."

"But I do hope and trust, my dear lady," returned the now really terrified Mrs. Beauchamp, "that nothing and nobody will be able to lead you aside from the plan we have so beautifully laid down together for the examination of all the most important parts of the Union. Say?"

"No, dearest Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp," responded the authoress; "most truly may you affirm, both to yourself and others, that *nothing* will induce me to abandon a project to which my heart and my understanding are alike pledged, alike wedded, alike bound!"

This was uttered with solemnity, the movement of the knife and fork being intermitted, and the raised eyes fixed devoutly on the ceiling.

"Thank God!" ejaculated Mrs. Colonel

Beauchamp, fervently; "then I don't care a hominy bean for earthly man, woman, or child. That tour can't be done every day, from July to eternity, and it is *I* that shall be, as I must say I ought, my dear Mrs. Allen Barnaby, your companion and leader, to edify you as to where you should look first and foremost."

Mrs. Allen Barnaby assiduously fed herself upon duck and green corn, and smiled and nodded an affectionate assent.

It is probable that the whole party at the boarding-table had heard enough of what had passed there, to feel some curiosity as to *what* was to be "brought down," and accordingly the cigar-smoking, which usually takes place at that hour in "*the chambers*"—the wives of American citizens being imperturbably amiable on this point—was postponed, and the whole party assembled in the saloon.

Patty failed not to do as she had declared she would do if it so pleased her, and as it did please her to scamper into her mamma's room the moment the party had risen from table, and to scamper down again as fast as she could run, with both her hands full of letters, and a few,

for fun, secured beneath her chin, she reached the saloon just as the last of the company entered it, and bouncing up to the longest table, bent over it, and discharged the three divisions of her load at the same moment.

“There!” she exclaimed; “now then, let’s see what it’s all about.”

“That dear creature’s vivacity will never be restrained, let the business in hand be ever so important!” observed her mother, moving with a very slow and deliberate pace towards the table.

Mrs. Allen Barnaby was in truth in no great hurry to reach it; for not only the ardent eager-minded Miss Matilda Perkins was already bending over the still open despatches, and possessing herself of their contents with the most assiduous industry, but very many others of the party were doing exactly the same thing, without the slightest shadow of restraint or ceremony; and as the lady to whom they were addressed happened to prefer their being read by all the world, she had no wish to check the operation by her presence. But Mrs. Allen Barnaby showed her English ignorance in thus restraining her steps—nothing

short of her withdrawing her letters altogether, or so folding them up, that no portion of their contents could be seen, would have sufficed to check it.

The lively Patty, however, either from consideration for those who could not find room to place themselves where they could read the various pages thus displayed, or else because she thought it a capital joke to show off to all the set at once how much they were in fashion, began reading them aloud with great distinctness, and certainly much to the satisfaction of all who listened to her.

“ Oh, what a madcap !” cried Mrs. Allen Barnaby, dropping into a chair before she had reached even the outskirts of the throng that was pressing round her daughter. “ Is not Madame Tornorino a saucy creature, Louisa ?”

This was addressed to the greatly-improved and almost gay Miss Perkins, who really seemed to be inspired with new life by the gentle kindness of Annie Beauchamp, the unceasing good-humour of Mr. Egerton, and more still—oh, infinitely more—by the very marked attentions which she saw her dear Matilda re-

ceiving from all the American gentlemen who approached her. To this appeal of Mrs. Allen Barnaby, she replied in an accent that really seemed almost fearless,

“ There does not seem to be much change in her, certainly, ma’am.”

But what Miss Louisa Perkins said at that moment was of little consequence. The “ Oh’s !” the “ My’s !” the “ Possibles !” that she heard from the party round the table, as Patty proceeded in her lecture, were so exactly every thing that Mrs. Allen Barnaby desired, that she attended to nothing else. She caught the eye of the major (who had seated himself at no great distance from her), just as Patty was pompously giving forth the profound admiration and respect of some general, colonel, or major, followed by the most pressing invitation to his “ mansion,” for as many weeks or months as it would be convenient for the admirable authoress and her party to remain ; and the look that was exchanged between them showed their feelings to be in the most perfect conjugal harmony.

“ I am delighted, madam,” said Mrs. Beau-

champ, when Patty had concluded her self-imposed task, "I am first-rate delighted to find that so many of the very highest standing among our gentlemen and ladies appear to be availed of the obligations they are likely to owe you; and I can't enough be thankful to myself for having lost no time in making that fact generally known to all."

"I am sure you are all excessively kind," returned Mrs. Allen Barnaby, arranging her heavy gilt bracelets with rather an absent air. "I perfectly delight in the country, and its charming inhabitants!"

"Wife!" whispered the major in her ear, as he passed by, to leave the room; "come up stairs—I want to speak to you."

And Mrs. Allen Barnaby really wanted to speak to him; so permitting him, with her usual tact, to disappear before she rose to follow him, she extended her hand to Mrs. Beauchamp, with the full recollection of all she had heard of that lady's reputed wealth and station, and said, not quite in a whisper,

"Oh, my dear friend! though of course exceedingly gratified by all this, depend upon it,

I can never feel for any other person, charming as they all are, what I feel for you! It is quite impossible I ever should!"

What a fine thing is fame! And must not Mr. John Milton have been in some degree mistaken, when he declared it to be

No plant that grows on mortal soil?

Mrs. Allen Barnaby was unquestionably still in the flesh, and yet she had not only found this "plant" growing in the most delightful abundance in Louisiana, but discovered that it was easily convertible to all manner of domestic purposes, from a pot-herb to a garland for the brow. Nay, had she at that moment poured several handfuls of dollars in the lap of Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp, that lady could not have considered it more completely satisfactory payment for all she had done, and all that she meant to do for the honour, glory, profit, and convenience of Mrs. Allen Barnaby, than did those few words from her in return. For Mrs. Allen Barnaby had not only acquired fame, but she knew it; and had skill enough *at once*, to bring it into current use, as a sort of bill of

exchange, which as long as her credit lasted, would pass very well in payment for most things in a country so exceedingly fond of celebrity and renown as the United States of America.

On reaching her room, Mrs. Allen Barnaby found her husband already there, and waiting for her rather impatiently.

“My dear,” he began, “I won’t waste any time complimenting you upon the capital manner in which you have set all these funny folks spinning, but I see it all, I promise you, and I admire your cleverness accordingly. What you and I must talk about, my dear, is not how all this has been brought about, but how we can best turn it to account.”

“That’s quite true, Donny,” she replied, with a decisive nod, that spoke as plainly as any words could have done, how completely she agreed with him. “Don’t fancy that I mean to content myself by being blown up by all these famous fine words—not a bit of it, I promise you. I don’t see any good reason whatever, why we should not travel about from house to house, as long as the fancy holds them, living upon the fat of the land, as we shall

be sure to do, major, and paying nothing for it but just scribbling and sputtering a little puff, puff, puff, as we go along. Shan't we '*progress*' like a steam-engine !"

The major clapped his hands, and laughed aloud.

"By Jove! my Barnaby," he cried, "I think I am more heartily in love with you than ever I was in my life ; and I don't believe you've got your equal in the old world, or the new either. To be sure, my love, that's what we'll do ! It is exactly the very thing that came into my head as Patty was reading ; and it will be perhaps a better spec than even your quick wit is quite aware of. Of course, I am not quite idle on my side ; I am sure it would be a shame if I was, and you working away as you do ; and I have found out a thing or two about these rich planter people. You, my dear, have got hold of their staple passion, as I may call it, or rather of their two staple passions,—that is to say, their vanity about their country and their greatness, and their red-hot terror of losing hold of their slaves. Now you'll keep on *working* 'em on this side, while I'll keep on *playing* 'em, deary, upon

another. I find that there isn't scarcely one of these rich slave-holding chaps, who make their niggers wait upon them up and down, from morning to night, so that they do little or nothing but eat, drink, sleep, and spit for themselves,—I am told that there isn't scarcely one of 'em who doesn't, more or less, try to keep themselves awake by play. Now can you fancy any thing, my dear, falling out much better than that? We shall have to write a letter of thanks, wife, upon my soul we shall, to those precious relations of yours that played *bo-peep* behind the curtain. We shall be living upon roses here,—I see it as plain as the handsome nose in your face, my Barnaby. For you may just remember, if you please, that credit doesn't hold out for ever, even in London, and with a fine house, and a fine wife, like you, to back it, Christmas would have been sure to come, Mrs. Allen Barnaby, and a *few* little bills, my dear, would have been sure to come with it; whereas in this blessed land, it seems exceedingly probable, I think, that we shall make money and spend none."

"Exactly so," replied his wife, bowing to him. "That, Mr. Major, is precisely the

scheme I have conceived for us during the next four or five months, perhaps. And then, if my work is completed, and I get paid for it in hard cash, as these people say I shall be, we may then venture, I think, to take a house of our own. I should like it to be in the capital, Donny, if they would but make up their minds as to where that is, but it seems hard to find any two of 'em that agree upon that point."

"Never mind that, my dear," returned the major, laughing; "when we do settle down we will take care to fix upon just whatever we think pleasantest; and if we go on as we expect to do, we shall be able to pick and choose as we like. But now, my dear, let us come to business. To which of all these people will it be best to go to first?"

"To the Beauchamps, Donny. Stick to the Beauchamps, my dear, in the first instance. It will look best, a great deal, because of all the fuss I have been making about my love, and affection, and admiration, and gratitude, and all the rest of it. Besides, they certainly *are* very rich; *he* is an inveterate card-player, in a sober way, and that *she* knows how to set a

thing going, we have had capital good proof already. So I say, stick to the Beauchamps at first. But then, you must please to observe that I don't mean to go galivanting in a steam-boat all down these everlasting rivers, that they talk about, for I suppose it is a matter of course that we should be expected to pay our own expenses on board, and just think what that would come to, with Patty and her Don upon our hands! Whereas, you'll observe, that when we get to their elegant Big-Gang Bank, that they all talk about, there will be an end of paying—except, indeed, that if the Perkinses really get in there too, I shall expect that they will make us some consideration for it. They need not pay us quite as much as they would at a boarding-house, you know; but they can't expect we should drag them about for nothing."

"My dear love," replied the major, "your notions on every point are so clear, so clever, so quick—in short, so admirable in every way, that I should be a great deal worse than a fool if I attempted to check or control you on any subject of business whatever. Any thing of that kind with the Perkinses, I should leave

entirely to you. In fact, to say the honest truth, I don't feel that I have tact and skill enough to do any thing of the sort myself, but I give you *carte blanche*, my dear."

"Very well, major," returned the lady, laughing, "I understand perfectly. You would like to get the dollars, but you would not like the asking for them. But never mind, my dear, I'll undertake all that, provided you don't object to my using your name a little—I really must do that, major, or I should not be able to make the thing look right and reasonable, as I should certainly wish to do."

"As you please, my love. My name is your own, you know, so of course you may use it as you like—and luckily they are both so devilish ugly, that I can't say I care much what you say. But now then, as to the time and manner of our starting? What do you mean to say to your dear friend?"

In reply to this question, Mrs. Allen Barnaby entered at some length into an explanation of her views, and as the result will show what these were, we may leave the conjugal consultation uninterrupted.

Annie Beauchamp had left the saloon by her usual point of escape, the window, as soon as Madame Tornorino commenced the reading aloud of her mamma's letters; for to say truth, there was something in the manner and bearing of this English beauty, which very particularly irritated the nerves of the young American. Nobody, however, followed her example; for no single individual present, except herself, seemed without some feeling of curiosity as to the contents of the despatches that Madame Tornorino was thus making public. Even Mr. Egerton, though hitherto he had not displayed any very strong feeling of interest in the immediate concerns of Major and Mrs. Allen Barnaby, was now evidently listening with the rest of the company to these flattering testimonials of Louisianian and Carolinian esteem; nor did his attention to the voice of the fair reader relax till she had, in loud and distinct tones, gone through the perusal of every document.

But upon Patty's throwing down the last sheet, and exclaiming, "There, that's all!" he immediately walked up to Miss Louisa Perkins, and offering his arm, said,

“Do you not think, Miss Perkins, that we should find the air of the balcony very refreshing?”

For half a moment the kind-hearted Louisa paused to consider whether there were any possible means by which she could transfer this honour to her sister; but perceiving, on turning her eyes round to look for her, that she was in earnest conversation with Mr. Horatio Timmshackle, she smiled a ready assent to the agreeable proposal, and taking the young man's offered arm, walked through the same window at which Annie Beauchamp had disappeared.

That young lady, whom for a few minutes Miss Louisa had really forgotten, was seated on her favourite bench beneath the orange-tree, with her eyes fixed in rather a vacant glance upon another orange-tree immediately opposite to her.

“Oh, dear me! There's that nice young lady all by herself!” exclaimed Miss Louisa, using a little gentle influence upon the arm of her companion, in order to lead his steps towards her. “And how long have you been here, all alone, my dear?” she continued, addressing

the solitary beauty with an affectionate smile. "I thought we were all in the great room together, listening to Miss Patty bawling out those surprisingly kind letters that have been addressed to her mamma. I will not deny that I, for one, was rather curious to hear them, but yet I think if I had known that you were sitting quietly here by yourself, I should have been apt to leave Miss Patty and the letters, for the pleasure of hearing you talk a little."

Annie smiled in return to this speech, but not very gaily, and moving to the end of the bench, made room for Miss Louisa to sit beside her. Mr. Egerton looked a little uncertain what to do, but after the hesitation of a moment, he took advantage of Miss Louisa's evident intention to leave space sufficient for him also, and sat himself down beside her.

As neither of her companions seemed at all inclined to converse, Miss Perkins seemed to think it incumbent on her to talk a little herself, and began accordingly :

"I can't help thinking, Miss Beauchamp," she said, "that the ladies and gentlemen of

your country must be the kindest and most hospitable people in the world. I could not have believed it possible that we should all of us have received such a quite wonderful number of invitations, and not one of us knowing a single soul in the whole country, only a few days ago, almost as one may say. I am sure Mrs. O—Mrs. Allen Barnaby I mean, has good reason to praise the country, and all the people in it, if she is really going to write a book, for I certainly think that they are kinder and more hospitable than any nation I ever heard of in all my life before, and I shall always say so, though I shan't write it."

This was a very long speech for Miss Louisa Perkins to make; but still it did not produce the effect she desired, by making her companions talk too, for neither of them spoke a single word. Mr. Egerton might have been seen, however, if any one had happened to look at him, stealing a glance across his neighbour at the beautiful young face beyond her. Perhaps the owner of that beautiful young face was aware of it, for the delicately pale cheek blushed deeply, and seemed to send its bright reflection

even to the brow and neck. But the head was instantly turned away, and the curious young Englishman had no opportunity at that moment of criticising its American contour.

“Your sister is trying, I think, to catch your eye, Miss Perkins,” said Mr. Egerton; “and, if I am not mistaken, she wants you to go to her.”

“Dear me, you don’t say so?” said Miss Louisa, hastily starting up and hurrying away; “and yet I wonder too, considering—”

But she moved so quickly, that she was out of hearing, and within the window before she could finish the sentence.

The young lady who had been stationed on the other side of her, had so completely turned herself away, leaning over the arm of the bench which they occupied, that she did not appear immediately to perceive her departure.

“Miss Beauchamp!” said Mr. Egerton, gently; so gently, indeed, that it was extraordinary his voice should have made her start as it did. “Miss Beauchamp,” said he, “I have a proposal—I mean that I have a bargain to propose to you, will you listen to it?”

The American young lady started a little at hearing these words, and upon looking round, and finding herself *tête-à-tête* with the English young gentleman who spoke them, half rose from her seat with the intention of walking away. But the *second thought* which prevented her doing this, not only came quickly, but decidedly; and it was with an air of being very particularly determined to hear him, and to answer him, too, that she turned herself round, and said,

“Yes, sir, I am quite willing to listen to you.”

Frederick Egerton would perhaps have been less disconcerted if she had answered less complyingly; but marvelling at his own folly in feeling thus, he rallied, and proceeded pretty nearly in the terms he had intended.

“That is very obliging,” he said, “and I will not detain you very long. What I wish to propose, Miss Beauchamp, is this: Let us mutually agree not definitively to form any opinion of each other’s country, and countrymen, and countrywomen,” he added, with a smile, “till we are fairly enabled to do so by

having rather more general information on the subject than we either of us possess at present."

Annie eyed him, almost steadily, for about a second, and then blushed a good deal for having done so; but she, too, rallied quickly, and replied,

"Perhaps, sir, it would be more like good Christians and reasonable human beings if we did so."

"But if we make this agreement," he resumed, with a smile which had no very malicious expression in it, and which certainly made him look very handsome; "if we make this agreement, Miss Beauchamp, we must do it fairly on both sides, must we not? I mean that we must not scruple to confess to each other the observations either favourable or unfavourable, which we may chance to make. This is necessary to truth and justice, is it not?"

Either in the words themselves, or in his manner of speaking them, there was something that made Annie blush again; but this emotion, however caused, seemed to make her angry,

either with herself or with him, for she knit her beautiful brows as she replied,

“If you wish me to confess that I entirely disapprove and condemn the line of conduct adopted by some of the gentlemen and ladies of New Orleans, towards some of the gentlemen and ladies of England, as witnessed both by yourself and me, sir, during the last few days, I am quite ready to gratify you. I do disapprove and condemn it greatly.”

“Perhaps you mean,” said Egerton, colouring a little in his turn, “perhaps you mean, Miss Beauchamp, that you disapprove and condemn any and every hospitality or kindness of any sort offered from the inhabitants of your country, towards the inhabitants of mine?”

“No!” she replied, but in an altered and less haughty tone. “No! I mean not that. I mean that I am sorry and ashamed to perceive that even the admirable judgment and good sense of Americans can be blinded and rendered useless by—by their prejudices.”

Egerton perceived that he had touched a string which vibrated too strongly for pique or pettishness to effect the tone which it produced.

He longed to speak to the beautiful and intelligent-looking young creature before him with more of candour and common sense than he had yet done, but felt strangely at a loss how to begin. He was perplexed not only by his own embarrassment, but by seeking to comprehend why he felt it.

Was he afraid of Miss Annie Beauchamp? Absurd idea! He rejected it indignantly, and mastering the sort of shyness which had checked him, he said more seriously, and perhaps, too, with more punctilious respect than he had ever before used in addressing her,

“May I venture, Miss Beauchamp, to believe that in using the word *prejudice* on the subject to which I think you allude, your opinions respecting it are at all like what you suppose mine to be?”

“I would rather have avoided all conversation with you on such a topic, sir,” replied Annie, after meditating for a moment; “but yet I believe that I have no right to think you mean to pain me by speaking on it. Nobody, I believe, supposes that any inhabitant of a Slave State can see any thing to lament in the

laws which exist in it. This is not a very fair judgment—but it is idle to complain of it; for it is only a part of the injustice that is done us. There are many among *us* who judge you—I mean your country—more fairly, Mr. Egerton. All Americans, as you would find, if you knew more individuals among them—all Americans do not suppose that all Englishmen approve the atrocities practised upon children in your manufacturing districts, nor would they think it right to take it for granted, that you *all* approve the regulations now enforced by your poor-laws.”

Egerton listened to her with great attention, and certainly with great astonishment also. Her words and manner produced, moreover, another feeling, but this related rather to himself than to her. He began to suspect that he *had* been guilty of injustice; that he had formed his opinions hastily, and without sufficient grounds, or at any rate that he had not allowed enough for individual exceptions; and with the candour which such self-condemnation was likely to produce, he replied,

“I believe you are very right, Miss Beau-

champ. I believe that we English do, all of us form opinions, and pronounce them too, a great deal too much upon general views, without seeking, as we ought to do, for exceptions that might lead to modify them. Your words have suggested this very useful truth, and I shall not forget them. But you will allow, I am sure, that in order to make this productive of all the good of which it is capable, it is necessary that we should occasionally meet with good sense and candour equal to your own, and that all our attempts to become acquainted with your widely-extended and important country, should not be always and for ever met with the broad assertion that it is the best and wisest in the world. This is a species of information which it is impossible to receive in the sort of wholesale manner in which it is given, and it is often rejected *en masse* because offered *en masse*."

These words produced on the mind of Annie Beauchamp an effect exceedingly like what hers had produced on that of Frederic Egerton. That is to say, she felt there might be some truth in them, and the coincidence made her

blush again ; but she smiled too, and in such a sort, that the young Englishman not only thought her a thousand times handsomer than ever, but he thought also, and very nearly independent of any such consideration, that he should greatly like to converse further with her, now that so much of the prejudice, which had mutually influenced them, seemed in so fair a way of being lessened, at least, if not altogether removed.

But exactly at this moment, and before Frederic had advanced further than gently smiling in return, Miss Louisa Perkins came back again through the window, exclaiming—

“ Oh, dear me ! You are quite mistaken in fancying my sister wanted me, my dear young gentleman ; for instead of that, I believe, between you and I, she would a good deal rather that I should just stay away. It was some time after I went in, before I could see at all, for you know they make the room so dark with blinds ; but when I did find her at last, I saw in a minute that I had better keep away, for she was talking with another person so very ear-

nestly, that they neither of them seemed as if they wanted any more company."

This was all said in a manner so unusually lively, and with such an air of extreme satisfaction, that it seemed as if her return to the balcony was particularly agreeable to her feelings. Miss Beauchamp again made room for her beside herself, but whether she was quite as much delighted at this renewed arrangement as Miss Louisa, may be doubted.

As to Egerton, he did not seem at all disposed to leave the matter in any doubt as far as he was concerned himself; for without attempting to utter a word in reply to Miss Perkins's information, he started from his place, and passing hastily through the saloon, left the house.

CHAPTER VI.

Conversation and Consultation between the Ladies of the Major and the Colonel—A curious Idea respecting the best manner of making Visiting answer.

ANOTHER large party, of which Mrs. Allen Barnaby was again very decidedly the heroine, concluded the day, and it was not till the following morning that any opportunity occurred for her to converse with her still more highly-favoured friend, Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp, upon the important subject of their approaching departure.

A very considerable change had taken place in the former lady's state of mind since the subject had been last canvassed between them ; and though in point of time this interval had not exceeded three days, whole years sometimes pass over us without producing an equally decisive

effect. There was, as the reader may by this time be pretty tolerably well aware, a good deal of native decisiveness of purpose in the character of Mrs. Allen Barnaby; and when she had determined upon doing anything, she generally did it. But notwithstanding this strong propensity to having her own way, the admirable fund of good sense which she possessed, prevented that way, for the most part, from leading her astray from her interest, and therefore in all former conversations with Mrs. Beauchamp, upon the subject of the plans they were to pursue together, she had hardly felt conscious of having any wish or will, except that of ingratiating herself still further in the favour of that lady, and promoting everything that could lead to increasing their intercourse and intimacy.

But now matters were altogether changed, and their mutual position pretty nearly reversed. Mrs. Allen Barnaby felt all over that it was she who was the person to confer honour, and Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp the person to receive it. In her opinion, therefore, it followed naturally that for the future, that lady's wishes and convenience were on all points to give way to her

own; and though quite determined not to permit either will or whim—no, not even her own, to deprive her of the solid advantages which she intended to reap from the devoted attachment of the wealthy planter's lady, her mode of addressing her when they were next *tête-à-tête*, approached very nearly in spirit to the celebrated—

'Tis mine to speak, and thine to hear,

of the romance. Nor was she at all mistaken in the calculation she had made respecting the degree in which this was likely to be endured, without producing any disagreeable result whatever. Perhaps Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp was a *little surprised* to hear that her dear friend had given up all thoughts of the delightful steam-boat excursion they were all to make together; but as to *anger*, no such feeling ever entered her head, and still less her heart; and her first words were, after becoming thoroughly *availed*, as she would have said, of the change which had taken place in Mrs. Allen Barnaby's intentions—

“Then you don't think, I expect, that you

should be able to fix yourself for another long journey so soon?"

"I don't think that I shall set off upon another long journey so soon," returned the authoress, slightly smiling; "but not from any fear of fatigue, or over-exertion. Where the mind is forcibly sustained, Mrs. Beauchamp, the body rarely gives way. No! My reasons for this alteration are wholly distinct from any idea of mere personal pleasure, or personal inconvenience. From you, my dear Madam, I have no reserves, nor do I wish to have any; the generous, the truly liberal hospitality with which you have invited myself and the whole of my suite to your house at Big-Gang Bank, can never be remembered without a feeling of gratified, and let me say grateful affection. I mean, I fully mean, to accept this hospitality, and to repose with my important manuscript before me, under the shadow of your friendly sugar-canes, well-knowing that I can in no way so well prove to you how thoroughly I appreciate your kindness, as by accepting it."

"And there I am sure you are quite right, my dearest lady," replied the really delighted

Mrs. Beauchamp. "There is nothing that I know of that would be so always agreeable to me as that; and to my husband, the colonel, I expect as much as to me. For in course, I calculate upon your husband, the major, not forgetting his card-playing, because he is in the country. He is too smart a gentleman for that, I expect."

"Oh, no! There is not the slightest fear of it, I am sure," returned Mrs. Allen Barnaby, with an encouraging nod. "The major is really one of the most amiable men in the world, and would rather, I am convinced, play every night of his life to amuse and please so excellent a person as the colonel, than follow any more favourite pursuit of his own. And to make you quite easy on that head, I can assure you that he really does not dislike cards at all himself. All men of fashion with us, you know, are accustomed to play, and rather high, too, even from their earliest childhood, and this of course becomes habitual to them, so that scarcely any of our really distinguished men ever like to go to bed till they have passed their accustomed hour or two at play. So do not let that worry

you, dear Mrs. Beauchamp, it will all do very well, I dare say. The major, as you may naturally suppose, has been accustomed to have his attention roused and kept awake by a tolerably high stake. All men of fortune are used to that, I presume, in every country. But there is no danger that our gentlemen should differ about that point—and in short, I look forward to enjoying a long visit to you exceedingly.”

Mrs. Beauchamp, who had already begun running over in her mind the different people to whom she could show off her illustrious guest, replied with the most cordial earnestness, assuring her that there was nothing the colonel would not feel ready, and bound to do, in order to show his respect and gratitude for the admirable, elegant expressions respecting the slave business, which Mrs. Allen Barnaby had read up to them.

“On that point,” replied our authoress, with a good deal of solemnity, “on that point I shall have much more to say. I consider it, in fact, one of such prodigious importance to this noble country, that I am almost tempted to believe I

should make my work of higher utility by devoting my pages wholly to the Slave States, than by mixing up in it any observations concerning that portion of the Union from whence slavery has been so unwisely banished. My general admiration for the whole country, and for all the truly superior people who inhabit it, would render it extremely disagreeable to me, of course, were I to feel myself obliged to blame the principles and conduct of any portion of them. And yet, my dear madam, how could I help pointing the finger of reprobation against those who actually threaten, as one of the gentlemen so well observed the other night, to revolutionize this magnificent and unequalled country, by abolishing slavery?"

Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp was in ecstasies while listening to this speech, and really seemed to restrain herself with difficulty from falling at the feet of the speaker.

"Oh, my!" she exclaimed, while tears of emotion trembled on her eyelids, "I expect that you *do* understand the nature of the Union better than any gentleman or lady that ever visited it before! Yes, my dear lady, you are

quite right. There is not one of us could bear or abide your speaking any way disrespectful of any part of our glorious and immortal country, and therefore, as you most elegantly observe, it will be far better, and preferable a hundred thousand times over, that you should write wholly and solely upon the great blessings and advantages of slavery, instead of turning away from our quite perfect state, just to belittle the others. Pray God you may keep in the same mind about that, my dear Mrs. Allen Barnaby, and then I shall be only just too happy, that's all."

"Yes, dear lady, that is my view of the case, exactly. And if we can but contrive to keep the good major, and the rest of our party, tolerably well contented and amused in the South and West, I really do not see any reason for our travelling North and East, just to find what is rather *less* perfect."

"Oh my! Yes, dearest Mrs. Allen Barnaby, that is exactly hitting it off to a nicety. *Rather less perfect*, that's just the fact. *Rather less perfect*," repeated the patriotic Mrs. Beauchamp, infinitely relieved by finding that nothing which had been said upon slavery (which was of course

the subject nearest to their warm southern hearts) had produced any very greatly reduced estimate of the general perfection of the Union, as a whole, on the mind of the enlightened traveller.

“There is one other point, my dear Mrs. Beauchamp, on which I must say a word or two,” resumed Mrs. Allen Barnaby, with an affectionate smile. “You must promise not to think that my bringing all my party with me is any mark of ostentation. Of course you know that with us an author of any celebrity is considered as paying the very highest compliment possible, by bringing friends with him to any house where he may be invited; it is always considered as a proof that he looks upon the family he visits as worthy to become a part of his own chosen circle; and this feeling indeed is carried so far, that I have known every one of a party of ten, who accompanied one of our favourite writers to a nobleman’s place in the country, desired to give their autographs, which were accordingly inscribed in the album of the duchess—the duchess? Yes, I am pretty sure it was the duchess—my own favourite duchess, who is always so kind to me. I just mention

this circumstance, my dear Mrs. Beauchamp, to show that in bringing my party with me, I am paying you the greatest compliment I have in my power to bestow. And I wish you to be aware, my dear friend, that this is my reason for doing it, and not any foolish feeling of ostentation. I hope you understand this?"

"I do, my dearest lady, most perfectly and entirely," replied Mrs. Beauchamp, warmly. "I feel all your goodness and kindness to me and my country, and nothing shall be wanting that I can do to make Big-Gang Bank agreeable to you. Only dear, dear lady, let me entreat you not to be running away in a hurry. It is a great wide town of a place, as you will see, and there will be room enough for you and your friends, and a heap of folks besides, if you should like more company. And that, my dear lady, is one of the blessed advantages of having a gang of slaves at command. It is likely enough that if you travelled eastward to Philadelphia, and Boston, and New York, or to any of the unfortunate free states, you would find that noble-minded as all the people are, on account of their being Americans, they would be so fretted and troubled

about where to get help, that ten to one they would not be able to invite you to their houses, so many at a time, as we can do."

"Poor things! Is it possible that their foolish prejudices keep them in so degraded a condition? It is really pitiable!" returned Mrs. Allen Barnaby, adding, with great sincerity, "I really doubt if, under all the circumstances, notwithstanding my reverence for them as Americans, I really very much doubt if I should find every thing there as completely to my taste as I do here."

Mrs. Beauchamp again applauded the admirable good sense and discrimination of her friend, and they parted, after its having been made perfectly well understood that the time of their setting off together for Big-Gang Bank, was to be entirely regulated by the pleasure and convenience of Mrs. Allen Barnaby.

Our provident and thoughtful heroine had already written very eloquent, amiable, and satisfactory letters to all her New Orleans correspondents, in reply to their invitations; and she now stood with a list in her hand of the names and the places, her promised visits to which were

likely to maintain the whole party at free quarters for at least six months to come.

“Bravo!” she exclaimed aloud to her heart; “and now for a little visit to the dear good Perkinses.”

She found the two sisters in a very comfortable state of mind, and by the help of a little ingenuity in a more comfortable state of body, too, than could have been expected, considering the usual temperature of the quarters that had been assigned them. Their bedroom was indeed almost intolerably small, and intolerably hot; but the good-natured Cleopatra hinted to them that nobody ever came into the wide sort of corridor upon which their attic apartment opened, and which, as is usual in most houses in that region, stretched the whole length of the house, except to look for boxes and trunks, that being the great receptacle for all such articles.

After receiving this hint, which was made intelligible by sundry grimaces, indicating the possibility of putting forth from their crowded room a table and chairs, the sisters ventured, without any more special permission, to establish themselves there during the performance of all the

needful stitchery which little wardrobes require ; and though its vicinity to the roof gave it rather a fearful resemblance to the Piombi of Venice, it had a strong current of air passing through it, and they both agreed in thinking it better to sneeze than to be stifled.

Here it was then, that with thimble and scissors, and pincushion and wire, and remnants of lace, and well-smoothed knots of ribbon, the fair Matilda fabricated caps and tuckers to her heart's content ; while her willing, well-pleased sister, sat opposite to her darning the stockings of both. Had they been discovered so employed a few short days before, the scene would have had quite a different aspect, for Miss Matilda might probably have been groaning under the necessity of decorating a head and bosom that appeared of value to no one but herself ; and even the more gentle-tempered Louisa, if not equally bitter and fretful in her misery, might have been looking very nearly as sad, from her dread lest the solemn promise she had received from her sister might not avail to preserve her from the self-destruction to which the utter indifference of all the American gentlemen

they had yet seen, seemed but too directly to lead.

But now the aspect of every thing was changed. Matilda was actually talking to her *sister* and *laughing*; while the happy Louisa, instead of dreading what she might hear her say next, sat listening and darning, and darning and listening, with the most comfortable air imaginable; and not without hope, perhaps, that among the many pretty speeches repeated to her as having been uttered by sundry unmarried American gentlemen, she might hear something that sounded really *promising*.

“So, girls!” began the panting Mrs. Allen Barnaby, as she approached them, “you are high enough to be sure, at the very tip top of all things; but when one *does* get here, it is fresh and pleasant enough. Get a chair for me, Louisa, that’s a good soul.”

And then, upon the gentle spinster’s running off to obey her, she dropped into that which she had left, fanning herself with the delightful vegetable fan of New Orleans, which she rarely put out of her hand, except when asleep, and turn-

ing her ample person all directions to catch the current of air, she exclaimed :

“Upon my word you have managed well, ladies ! I’ll be hanged if I have felt any place so cool since I’ve been in this stove of a town.”

“Oh, dear me ! I’m glad you like it !” replied the kind Louisa, assiduously arranging a ragged footstool for her accommodation, and without in the least intending to be ironical, as some might have fancied, could they have felt the atmosphere that was thus applauded. “I do believe it is not much hotter here in the garrets than it is down below.”

“Hotter, Louisa ! I tell you it’s twenty times cooler than our room ; but I do believe you two are very sharp and clever in looking after your own comforts, and that’s one reason why I think you will be pleased at hearing what I am come to say to you now.”

The sisters were all attention, and Mrs. Allen Barnaby, proceeded,

“There is no need, I suppose, for me to tell you, girls, that I’m got already to be all the fashion at New Orleans. I suppose you have found that out for yourselves ?”

“I think so, indeed, my dearest friend, and no wonder,” returned Matilda; and, “Yes, indeed, ma’am, ’tis quite plain, as you say,” chimed in Louisa.

“Well, then, I hope you will be ready to allow that I am, notwithstanding all that, the same good, kind friend you have ever found me, when I tell you that one of my first thoughts has been, how to make you two share in the advantages which all this fashion and admiration brings with it.”

“Oh, my dearest, my most adored friend!” exclaimed the enthusiastic Miss Matilda, clasping her hands, and fully persuaded that they were to be taken upon some exceedingly gay visit.

“Listen to me quietly Matilda, my dear, and you will see that it is not only your pleasure, but your real interest I have got in view,” exclaimed Mrs. Allen Barnaby, gravely. “You know what you pay for your board here, and I am told that in many places it is much dearer still, and it has therefore come into my head, and into that of the dear good major too, that we may be able by a little painstaking, and some few sacrifices perhaps on our parts, we may be able, I say, if

you will pay to us just two-thirds of what you do here, to get you hooked in for visitings that may last for months to come, and that, too, in the midst of the very best company, and with plenty of gentlemen about us, Matilda, into the bargain. What do you say to that, my dears?"

Now it is quite certain that after the public reading of Mrs. Barnaby's letters, which, naturally enough, the sisters had listened to very attentively, they had conceived hopes, not only that they should be included in the invitations, for that was a matter not of hope, but of certainty, inasmuch as they had heard that they were so included, with their own watchful ears, but that the scanty purse which supplied their wants, would be very greatly relieved thereby, and that the nine dollars which they now paid every week for their boarding, might be converted while these visits were in course, to other very much needed purposes.

It was, therefore, rather a blank look that was exchanged between them on first hearing Mrs. Allen Barnaby's generous proposal; but, happily for their peace and prosperity, they both knew

her a great deal too well to venture any thing in the slightest degree approaching to a remonstrance; and Matilda, being quicker than her sister, and feeling perhaps less difficulty in uttering protestations of gratitude more expected than felt, broke forth, just in time, into a volley of thanks, which sufficed to keep every thing smooth, and not only to ensure them the visits, and the mitigated expense, but to spare them the very disagreeable assurance that they might just take themselves off, and shift for themselves as soon as they pleased.

“And what do YOU think of the scheme, Miss Louisa?” demanded their patroness, turning short round upon that quiet lady with a good deal of energy both of look and voice.

“I shall think it a very nice scheme, Mrs. O—Mrs. Allen Barnaby, if it won’t be making ourselves too troublesome to you,” replied the meek spinster, blushing a little.

“Oh! Very well then that business is settled, and you may get ready to pack yourselves up pretty quickly; for I don’t mean to stay in this horrid hot place many days longer, I promise you.” And then hinting that though

the corridor *was* the coolest place in the house, the two Miss Perkinses some how or other contrived to make it hot by sitting there, she got up, nodded a farewell, and departed.

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Egerton makes a little discovery, but is rather puzzled as to what use he ought to make of it—His intimacy with Miss Louisa increases prodigiously.

IT happened in the course of the following two or three days, all of which were very fully occupied in paying and receiving visits by the Allen Barnaby party, that Mr. Egerton found himself standing one evening, quite accidentally, behind Major Allen Barnaby, while that gentleman was engaged at *écarté* at a tolerably high stake, in one of the most fashionable drawing-rooms of New Orleans. Being behind the major, it followed, of course, from the established habits of the two affectionately-attached individuals, that he was opposite to his elegant son-in-law, Don Tornorino, who never failed to be so placed when his respected father-in-law amused

himself by playing at cards. Frederic Egerton himself was no great card-player, and knew as little, or rather less, perhaps, about it than most people ; nevertheless, he had not remained very long in this position before he saw, or fancied that he saw, certain looks of intelligence steal from beneath the heavy black eyelashes of the Don towards the major. Of course, the moment he conceived this idea, he naturally began to observe more closely ; but the doing so did not greatly assist him in positively ascertaining whether the fact were so or not. If it were, it was impossible to refuse to Patty's darling all the credit that could possibly belong to a most dexterously skilful performance of the task. For if at one moment the glance of his eye evidently fell direct upon the major, it wandered so idly the next, here, there, and everywhere, that it was almost impossible to suppose him engaged in any occupation loyal or disloyal, that demanded attention.

In this manner Egerton was kept in a state of great uncertainty respecting the fact of collusion, or no collusion, between the parties upon whom accident had thus made him a spy, and for a

longer space than it is usual for a loiterer to remain in any one place. But at length, one of the young ladies of the family invited him to listen to a song about to be sung in the next room, and he was then obliged to depart without having at all satisfied his mind one way or the other.

Though there is something rather irritating to curiosity in such a doubt as this, Frederic Egerton cared too little about any of the parties, to have kept it long in his remembrance, had not other circumstances occurred to revive it there. *Why*, Mr. Frederic Egerton was still at New Orleans, he would himself have found it extremely difficult to say; but though his laundress had been punctual in the most exemplary degree, and though Cleopatra had obeyed all the commands intended to accelerate his departure, with the most scrupulous exactness, there he was still, and probably quite as unable to give any satisfactory answer to a question respecting his future, as to a question respecting his past movements.

For some reason or other, it might be on account of his handsome person and pleasing

address, Mr. Egerton had been invited to all the parties that were going on, and as at this particular moment every thing *English* seemed the rage at New Orleans, thanks to the charming Mrs. Allen Barnaby, he had been told by several of the country gentlemen whose houses were about to be opened to the authoress, that his company at the same time would be considered as a very agreeable addition to the English circle. His answer to all these civilities had uniformly been that he doubted whether he should be still in the country, but that it would give him great pleasure, that he was exceedingly obliged, and so forth. When it happened, however, that a similar invitation was given him by Colonel Beauchamp, and very civilly seconded by his wife, his reply was not so ready. Considering his intense aversion to Mrs. Allen Barnaby, her husband, daughter, her daughter's husband, and her friend Miss Matilda, and considering that he perfectly well knew that they were all to be of the party, it seems strange that he should have felt any hesitation about giving a decided refusal to such an invitation the very moment he received it. On the contrary, however, though he

certainly coloured a little, which looked as if he felt somewhat embarrassed by the invitation, he replied very distinctly that he should have great pleasure in waiting upon them.

This invitation had been given and accepted before the evening on which a suspicion of unfair play, on the part of the major, had arisen in the mind of Mr. Egerton. Had it been otherwise, it is possible that a natural distaste to being thrown into the society of any one of whom it was possible to conceive such an idea, might have caused him to give a different answer; but as matters now stood, the young Englishman felt more disposed to protect the hospitable American planter than to turn away from him, and as a first step towards doing so, determined to have a little conversation with Annie's pale *protégée*, Louisa, for the purpose, if possible, of learning something concerning the position held by the Barnaby family at home. Not indeed that he wanted the gentle spinster's evidence to convince him that the father, mother, and daughter were not, as perhaps he would have phrased it, "*de nous autres*," nor that the son-in-law was not a true-blooded Hidalgo, nor that his friend

Louisa herself, or her fair sister, were not ladies particularly well educated or highly bred. All this he might have trusted to his mother-wit to decide for him ; but he thought it worth while to discover, if possible, whether the military *chef* of the party had or had not enjoyed the reputation of being an honest man.

It required no very difficult manœuvring to induce the grateful Louisa to walk out upon the convenient terrace with him, even though the doing so involved the necessity of an evident and obvious *tête-à-tête* between them, under the shelter as usual of a blooming orange-tree.

“ How do you like this warm climate, Miss Perkins ? ” he began. “ I think you seem to suffer from it less than most of us.”

“ It does not make me ill at all, Mr. Eger-ton,” she replied ; “ but I suppose all English people would like a little more cool air if they could get it.”

“ Undoubtedly. Have your friends the Barnabys been used to such a climate as this before ? I rather suppose not, from their appearing so greatly oppressed by it.”

“ Upon my word that is more than I am able to say,” returned Miss Louisa ; “ for, notwithstanding we have got so very intimate, we have not known them long.”

“ Indeed ! I rather imagined you were related,” said Egerton.

“ Not at all, sir ; not the least in the world,” she replied.

“ Then you must think them very amiable people, Miss Perkins, to set off on so long an expedition with them,” he observed.

Miss Louisa was rather at a loss how to reply to this observation ; for, in fact, it was during but a short portion of their not long acquaintance that she had been beguiled by her good-nature into thinking any one of them amiable at all ; yet though she hesitated about saying this in so many words, she had quite tact enough to feel that this good, kind young gentleman (whom she had made her mind up to be certain, was violently in love with her young friend and ally Annie Beauchamp) was not at all likely to admire or approve the ways and manners of the Barnaby race more than she did herself, and it was more from esteem for him

than any love of gossip, and less still of any unkind feeling, that she answered,

“ I don’t know about that, Mr. Egerton. My sister Matilda thought she should like to see something of this country, and its ways, which she thought likely, I believe, to be greatly different from ours, and that it was that brought us across the sea.”

“ That was very sisterly and good-natured on your part, Miss Louisa,” he replied ; “ but do you not think it was rather a dangerous experiment for two single ladies to put themselves under the protection of a gentleman whom they knew so little of? You must forgive my speaking so freely, Miss Perkins; on the score of my being a countryman.”

“ Indeed, sir, it needs no excuse; on the contrary, I take it exceedingly kind of you, and I won’t deny but what I think your remark seems a very just one. To be sure we seem to be very comfortable just now, because all the American ladies and gentlemen seem inclined to be so civil to us on account of Mrs. O—I mean Mrs. Allen Barnaby’s writing a book about them.”

“What name was it, Miss Louisa, that you were going to give her?” said Egerton; “something beginning with an O?”

Though Miss Louisa Perkins had been certainly desired not to refer in any way to the former appellation of the major, it did not occur to her as possible that Mr. Egerton should take any unfair advantage of him on account of his having changed his name, and she therefore replied with perfect frankness,

“I was going to say the name O'Donagough, sir. They used to call themselves O'Donagough when we first knew them, which is now rather better than a year ago.”

“O'Donagough?” repeated Egerton, musingly. “Is it an Irish name?”

“I don't know any thing about that, Mr Egerton,” she replied. “We made acquaintance with them first at Brighton, where, as I dare say you know, sir, a great many strangers are always coming and going without knowing very much about one another. But this I must say for Major and Mrs. O'Donagough, and their daughter Miss Patty as she then was, that we saw them in the very best of society. Indeed

they were very nearly related to some of the highest company there. Perhaps you may have heard of General Hubert, sir? He seemed to be a gentleman very well known by all the higher sort of people."

"General Hubert?" repeated Egerton, with a stare of great astonishment. "These Barnabys, as they now call themselves, related to General Hubert? I cannot help thinking that you are mistaken about that, Miss Louisa. I do not think it likely that General Hubert should be related to these—to this family that you are with."

"I don't think it does seem very likely, sir, myself," replied Miss Louisa, very ingenuously; "but yet I do assure you it is quite true, for I was in their company myself, and my sister Matilda with me, when General Hubert, and Mrs. Hubert, and young Mr. Hubert the son, and old Mrs. Compton, Mrs. Hubert's aunt, all came to drink tea and pass the evening with Major and Mrs. O'Donagough, as they were called then, at Brighton. And my sister Matilda made the tea; so you, see, sir, that I could not very well be mistaken."

"'Tis very strange," said Egerton, looking almost as much mystified as the Danish prince himself when using the same words. "But certainly, Miss Perkins," he added, after a few moments' consideration, "I do not see how it is possible you could be mistaken about it."

"Oh no, sir, you may quite take my word for it, that I'm not at all mistaken about this relationship. And what's more," continued Miss Louisa, with natural eagerness to convince her companion that she was making no blunder in her statement, "what's more, Mr. Egerton, I have been at a party in their house in Curzon-street, in London, when not only General Hubert and his lady and daughter were there too, but ever so many more ladies and gentlemen also, who were, I believe, related to the general or his lady. A Mr. and Mrs. Stephenson were some of them. Perhaps, sir, you may know the names of Mr. and Mrs. Stephenson, too?"

"Certainly I do," replied Egerton, his puzzle becoming greater as his belief strengthened, as to the correctness of Miss Louisa's statement.

“ Did the Huberts and Stephensons know these friends of yours by the name of Barnaby as well as by that of O’Donagough ?”

Miss Perkins reflected for a moment before she answered, and then replied,

“ Upon my word I don’t know about that—I don’t much think they ever were called Barnaby till they came away.”

“ May I ask you, Miss Perkins,” resumed the persevering Egerton, “ if you know the reason which induced the major to change his name ?”

This question seemed to awaken the simple-minded Louisa to the impropriety she had been guilty of in so frankly stating to a perfect stranger a circumstance which she had been especially desired to conceal, and she stammered, blushed, and faltered considerably before she determined how to reply to it; but at length she said in an accent calculated to remove suspicion, if any thing could,

“ I believe, Mr. Egerton, I have done what they would think very wrong in talking about it at all; but though I must say the doing it at first was just thoughtless and nothing else, yet

your kindness, sir, in seeming to care a little about us, because of our being English, makes me feel as if I had done no more than right neither ; and this much I think I ought to say over and into the bargain, and that is, that Mrs. Allen Barnaby, as we call her now, *did* tell me, and my sister, Matilda, the whole history why it was that the major thought it best to change his name, and that it was rather for his honour than the reverse, and what many a gentleman, I believe, would be proud to tell of."

The name of General Hubert, however, probably did more than this simple testimony of the worthy Louisa's opinion on this point, towards persuading Mr. Egerton that he was mistaken as to the notion he had formed respecting the major's style of play. Nevertheless, not even this could altogether remove a vague feeling of doubt upon the subject, by no means indicative of very high personal esteem for his well-connected countryman. And it gave him satisfaction to think, as he meditated upon the visit he was so unexpectedly engaged to make, to Colonel Beauchamp, that at least he should in some sort be able to repay his

hospitality by giving a little attention to the game, if it should happen that he and the military consort of the authoress should chance to play together during the time his own visit lasted.

CHAPTER VIII.

The whole Allen Barnaby party set off with their new friend for Big-Gang Bank, the seat of Colonel Beauchamp—Their reception—A young lady's boudoir.

ALL preliminaries being thus far settled, Mrs. Allen Barnaby very gracefully gave Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp to understand that her anxiety to find herself at Big-Gang Bank, would admit of no further delay, her notes having, in fact, exactly reached the point at which the sight of that "magnificent piece of social machinery, an actively organized slave plantation" (as Judge Johnson had elegantly described it in Congress), was become absolutely necessary.

This was quite enough to set the active mind and body of Mrs. Beauchamp into such a state of excitement, as very speedily brought all preparations depending on her to a conclusion; and even the soporific colonel himself was sufficiently

awakened by the intelligence to make him, on hearing it, pronounce in a very decided tone, "My dear, the sooner we set off, the better."

But the most remarkable phenomenon produced by these new arrangements, was the manner in which they were received by Annie; for though disappointed in her hopes of an expedition up the Mississippi, and doomed moreover to endure at her own home the presence of the whole Barnaby, *plus* Tornorino party, in the oppressive character of guests, it did not appear to vex her at all. It was, indeed, quite astonishing to see how well she bore it.

The business of departure therefore was both rapidly and smoothly brought to a conclusion. Mrs. Carmichael wheezed forth her hopes of seeing them all again, and Patty's elegant and pious friend, Mrs. General Gregory, declared that nothing should prevent their forthwith repairing to their plantation mansion, in order to receive the whole party on their leaving Big-Gang Bank.

The journey produced no events particularly interesting, which might partly be owing to the lassitude produced by the heat of the weather;

for though it was certainly a great relief to quit the glare of New Orleans for scenes in which they had trees instead of houses to look at, the exertion of travelling equalized the matter, and the Europeans of the party had little energy for any thing beyond fanning themselves, and sipping iced lemonade from stage to stage as they proceeded.

At length, however, this unavoidable martyrdom was over, the melting journey at an end, and all the luxuries of a rich planter's establishment around them.

In point of picturesque beauty, Big-Gang Bank had little to boast of, being a wide-spreading brick edifice, situated in a large square enclosure of coarse, ill-kept grass, surrounded by a zigzag fence, and with nothing in sight but a considerable expanse of flat country, covered with sugar-canes, cotton-bushes, and rice-grounds, diversified at intervals by clusters of negro-huts. The mansion itself consisted of a lofty centre, and two low wings, the former surmounted by a sort of pointed pediment, in the middle of which yawned a huge round aperture, containing the enormous dinner-bell. The wings which had no

second story, displayed a row of at least a dozen windows in each, and not only along this lengthy front, but round the whole building ran a deep portico, which being lined with orange-trees and pomegranates, redeemed it in some degree from the scorched-up aspect produced by the ill-complexioned material of the building, and the defective verdure of the lawn which surrounded it.

But it was not on the expanse of her mansion, or on the beauty of the flowering shrubs which adorned it, that Mrs. Beauchamp chiefly prided herself, though well aware that it was all very first-rate elegant. But her eye sparkled as the carriages containing her numerous guests drove up to the portico, and she perceived the centre door that was thrown open to receive them, crowded with gaily-clad negroes. About a dozen of these, male and female, ran forward as the equipages approached, ready to perform all offices, necessary and unnecessary, that might be required of them.

Their light summer garb, more picturesque than abundant, was for the most part white, perfectly clean, and set off to great advantage by

the mixture of bright-coloured calico introduced into their girdles and turban-like head gear.

“You did not look, I expect, for such an elegant gang of domestic niggers in any private gentleman’s dwelling, did you, my dear lady?” said the smiling Mrs. Beauchamp, addressing her most important guest. “But these are not the one-half of the household gang, and not any single one of them have any more to do with the canes, or the cotton, or the rice, than you have.”

“It is indeed a most splendid establishment!” replied Mrs. Allen Barnaby, raising her hand as in admiration.

“It is a great loss as to labour, in course,” resumed Mrs. Beauchamp; “but my colonel is a very liberal, high-minded gentleman, and chooses that his wife and his daughter should live in all luxury, according as they have a right to do. Doubtless, dear lady,” she continued, with a pitying shake of the head, “you have heard and read enough about the want of helps among the American ladies; and it serves them right, too, there is no denying it, for thinking of such a thing as turning a free-born American

into a drudge, to come and go at any body's bidding. True it is, no doubt of it, and very fitting too, that they should want helps; but now, Mrs. Allen Barnaby, ma'am, I flatter myself you will have an opportunity of making your own observations, and finding out for yourself the alone reason why so many of the finest ladies in the world are often forced to do their own dirty work, and will be able to do justice to the real gentility of those who know better what is due to themselves. Walk in, dear ladies, walk in, and pray remember that you may all of you just ring and call as much as you like. Indeed, you'll only have to clap your hands, ladies, in order to bring as many domestic blacks about 'you as you can want or wish for. Pray make no scruples, and don't fear that you are taking them from out-door work, for they are never sent into the grounds from year's end to year's end, except just for punishment, and then they get their flogging in the fields, which is a deal better, you know, than having it to do in the house."

This speech, which was begun as they left the carriage, lasted the whole length of an

enormous hall which traversed the building from front to back, affording by its perfect shade, and the current of air which passed through it, a very agreeable contrast to the heat which the travellers had been enduring.

“ Oh, goodness ! What a delightful place ! ” exclaimed Madame Tornorino. “ I hope, ma’am, you mean to sit down here a little ? ”

“ This *is* beautiful, to be sure ! ” chimed in the greatly comforted Matilda, beginning to fan herself anew with refreshed strength and violence.

“ Beautiful ? ” repeated Mrs. Allen Barnaby, in an accent that seemed to scorn the insufficient epithet. “ It is noble ! It is magnificent ! ”

Mrs. Beauchamp, with patriotic and domestic pride, both busy at her heart, looked round upon the admiring guests, as if she could have kissed them all.

“ Oh, my ! ” she gaily exclaimed, “ you mustn’t talk about this being beautiful. It is just large, and lofty, and fresh, that’s all. But you, my dear Mrs. Allen Barnaby, have taught your own clear-sighted way of seeing every

thing to your whole party, and I'm sure it's a glory and a pleasure to show you any thing. But now please to walk in here, ladies. This is what we call number one, because it is our littlest drawing-room. But that's the proper way to begin, you know. We ought always to begin with the beginning, and so I always bring new visiters in here first. Now do please to sit down, all of you, and refresh yourselves. Major Allen Barnaby and monsieur must be so kind, I expect, to excuse Pa's stealing off so. It has always been his way, gentlemen, and we mustn't look for his changing it now. If it's twenty times in a year that he goes from home, the first thing he does upon coming back to it, is to go into a little dark room of his own picking and choosing, and then he lights a cigar, and gets a nigger or two to bring him a mint julap, with a nice bit of ice in it; and then, gentlemen, he sends off for his confidential looker, who presently puts him up to every thing that has happened on the estate since he went; and I don't believe he'd lay down in his bed till he had heard all this, if it was ever so."

The major and his son-in-law hastened to assure their amiable hostess that they should be immeasurably sorry if their being at Big-Gang Bank should in any degree interfere with the habits of Colonel Beauchamp; all of which having been said with the most perfect politeness on all sides, the whole party sat down on the various couches and sofas that seemed to invite them, and then Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp clapped her hands. Upon this two handsome negro-girls made their appearance, side by side, at the door, and with a movement so similar and simultaneous, that they rather looked like one piece of machinery than two self-moving human beings.

“Sangaree, whisky, melons, ice, and cakes,” said Mrs. Beauchamp, in a voice of authority that sounded a little like a word of command given on parade, and ere the eye could wink, the two figures became invisible.

“And this is the country,” exclaimed Mrs. Allen Barnaby, with emotion, “which the audacity of English travellers has dared to libel as inferior to their own! I blush to think that I am an Englishwoman.”

“Never mind that, dearest Mrs. Allen Barnaby!” replied her amiable hostess, in a tone of the most friendly spirit of consolation. “That is a sort of misfortune, you know, that nobody can help, let them wish it ever so much. But this I will say, that if ever a lady deserved to be a free-born American female, it is you, yourself!”

“Dear, kind Mrs. Beauchamp!” returned the travelling lady. “How sweet it is to hear you say so! I would not exchange such praise as those words contain for the richest diadem that ever encircled the tyrannical head of a European monarch!”

Mrs. Allen Barnaby uttering these words, appeared to be overpowered by her feelings, and drew forth her pocket-handkerchief to catch the drops that emotion forced to flow. Fortunately, the black automatons reappeared at this moment, each bearing a tray, the twin of which was in the hands of the other.

Those who have never partaken of iced sangaree when the thermometer stands at a hundred, cannot be trusted to calculate its power of soothing the spirits. Mrs. Allen Bar-

naby tasted and was revived—drank freely—for it is a mixture that like Cowper's tea, "cheers, but not inebriates," and was herself again—gay, animated, inspired, and eloquent.

"Well now!" said Mrs. Beauchamp, looking cheerfully round her, "I do think we shall be as pleasant a party as ever was got together. I wonder what has become of the young English gentleman, Mr. Egerton? I heard him say positively that he would be here to-day, and unless he has right-down lost himself some way or another, I expect he ought to be here by this time; for I calculate he must have come to the same point by steam as we did, only setting off by the next turn. What's that, Annie?" she continued, looking out of the window as conveniently as she could without approaching it. "Is not that a gentleman on horseback?"

"I don't know, mamma," said the young lady, suddenly passing through a pair of folding doors into an inner room. I grieve that she should so have said, because next to Mrs. Allen Barnaby herself, Annie Beauchamp is the heroine of the present narrative; and as the words thus uttered were not true, I feel com-

pelled to acknowledge that she does not altogether deserve the dignified position in which my partiality has induced me to place her.

Annie Beauchamp said that she did not know whether the approaching figure were that of a gentleman on horseback, whereas she did know perfectly well, not only that it was a gentleman on horseback, but that, moreover, the gentleman was Frederic Egerton. Whatever might have been the motive for such falsification, it was, of course, indefensible, and I must leave her to the mercy of those to whom I have been compelled by my love of historic truth to make this disclosure.

A few minutes more, and the fact became evident to all, and Mrs. Beauchamp prepared herself again to do the honours of her mansion, her sangaree, and her slaves, in such a manner as to elevate her country in the eyes of another European, to the highest pitch that it was possible for her to reach.

The young man paid his compliments to the circle assembled, with his usual graceful ease, although it did not appear to consist exactly of the party he expected to find there. Perhaps he was

disappointed because Colonel Beauchamp was not himself present to welcome him.

Neither the colonel nor his daughter, however, made their appearance till the hour of dinner ; the former being engaged exactly in the manner his lady had described, and the latter choosing for some reason or other to pass the interval in her own room.

It was really a pretty room, that allotted to the heiress of Big-Gang Bank, for it was decorated according to her own fancy. It was on the ground-floor, at the north-east corner of one of the wings, and opened by two large French windows upon a very small, but bright and fragrant flower-garden, enclosed for, and kept sacred to, her own especial use and benefit.

And here all Annie's private hours were passed, and all her private studies carried on ; and, considering that she did not deal in necromancy, or any other branch of the art usually denominated black, a very remarkable degree of mystery attended the prosecution of these studies.

Annie Beauchamp had for the last year of her life been very busily engaged in educating herself ; having with a good deal of acuteness dis-

covered, that during the time others had been engaged in teaching her, she had learnt nothing. But in order to perform this double part of tutor and pupil, it was absolutely necessary that she should not be watched ; for as every body excepting herself considered her education not only completed, but completed on the most liberal and extended scale, her own exertions would have been treated as a work of supererogation, which it would be quite as well to leave alone. Moreover, this self-education was carried on in a style that would indisputably have brought upon her as many reproofs for neglecting her studies in one line, as for prosecuting them unnecessarily in another.

Annie had cost her adoring parents a vast number of "quarters" in all the most approved branches of American female accomplishments, to no single one of which she had devoted an hour since she left "college." Algebra and mathematics she wholly neglected ; her plane trigonometry she tore into fragments, and made her own little slave, Nina, sweep it all away ; astronomy fared not much better ; and all the elements of all the ologies were crammed into a

basket together, and carried off in company with the trigonometry. From both music and painting, which had of course been "quartered" upon her as long as she remained in other hands than her own, she also turned resolutely away, not in distaste, but despair. In short, Annie Beauchamp did nothing but read, and that she did with an avidity and perseverance for which nothing but her unlimited credit with a New York bookseller could have supplied materials.

To the scene of all this quiet study, the eccentric little girl now repaired ; but instead of taking a book, she placed herself at the greatest possible distance from her reading corner ; and seating herself in a low chair, with her fairy feet upon a somewhat high footstool, her crossed arms resting on her lap, and her absent eyes fixed upon the floor, she would have made as pretty a study for the attitude commonly described by the words "nose and knees," as ever was seen. Ere she had indulged many minutes in this half-sulky, half-happy position, which at that moment was particularly well suited to her state of mind, her enjoyment of it was disturbed by the entrance of Nina.

This Nina was a negro-girl exactly of her own age, who had been commanded to play with her in infancy, and elected to the especial honour of being the young heiress's personal attendant from the time of her return from school. She was not suffered, however, to leave the plantation when her young mistress went from home; because, as the confidential manager of the household gang informed his master, she was so "darnation 'cute," that she'd be sure to bring home mischief if she did.

The black and white girls, therefore, had been separated for two months, and despite the tremendous interval between the heiress and the slave, the pleasure of meeting was mutual, though perhaps not quite equal in degree. Annie had many things to think about; Nina had but one, and that one was her young mistress.

The black girl entered through the open window with the light spring of an antelope, and dropping upon her knees before Annie's footstool, seized first upon one delicate hand, and then upon the other, to kiss and fondle them, while she exclaimed in English as pure as that spoken by her well-read young mistress,

"It is like shade in the midst of the rice-ground."

"What is like shade, Nina?" said Annie, smiling kindly on her.

The girl sighed deeply, and did not answer.

"What is like shade, Nina?" repeated her mistress.

"The sight of something very dear and long unseen," replied the girl. "But it is not like the shade of the free forest," she continued, looking up to the face of Annie, with an expression of great suffering.

"What is the matter with you, Nina?" said the young lady, looking with much surprise at the troubled countenance of her pretty slave. "Do you mean to say that you want me to give you your freedom?"

"*My* freedom? Do you think, Miss Annie, that it is possible I could ever wish to be free whilst I belong to you? Oh! do not think it! Such a wish never crossed my mind for a single instant since I have been old enough to know what wishing meant."

"Then what *do* you mean, my dear girl? And what does that tear mean, Nina? Why do

you look upon me so very sadly? I never saw you in this humour before," said Annie, looking earnestly at the dark face that rested on her knees.

"How should I be able to tell you?" replied the girl, evasively. "Even you, Miss Annie, sometimes seem hardly to know what is passing in your own mind; and do you wonder that with all my ignorance, I should not know more than you do?"

"What have you been reading, Nina, since I went away?" demanded Annie, looking grave. "I think you have been wasting your time with some of those foolish novels. Foolish for you, they certainly are, for they cannot by possibility convey to you a single useful idea."

"I have not.—But never mind now, dearest Miss Annie, about my reading. It matters little what a negro-girl reads, so that she leave not her work undone."

"But why do you look so sad, Nina? You have not told me that, you know," said her young mistress, looking curiously in the large eyes that had not yet been able to wink away their superfluous moisture. "Why are your eyes full of tears, my poor girl?"

“Why, the truth is, Miss Annie,” said the young slave, “I am sorry you are come home, though I love to see you. I was so glad when I heard you were going to be very happy, and to travel about; and that is a reason, you know, why I may be sorry you are come home again so soon.”

“I should scarcely have thought you would have cried about it either,” said Annie, looking puzzled for a moment. “But you were always an odd girl, Nina, though a good one too, as times go. But there—go now, I can’t talk to you any longer, for I am thinking of something else. You may go into my bedroom, Nina, and unpack all my things, and bring all the books you find into this room. There—go.”

At first hearing the word “go,” the girl had sprung upon her feet, but even after hearing it a second time, she still lingered.

“I will go,” she said, but without moving.

“What ails you, Nina?” said Annie, laughing; “I think you are bewitched. Why do you not go where I bid you? What a spoilt girl you are, Nina! Tell me now, naughty

blacky, ought I not to send you to the rice-ground?"

"If you did, Miss Annie," she replied, shaking her head, "perhaps I should go more quickly."

She now moved a step or two towards the door, but before she reached it, turned round, and said,

"Will you not go, Miss Annie, and pay a visit to the good lady at Portico Lodge?"

"To be sure I shall go and pay a visit to the good lady at Portico Lodge," replied Annie. "Did you ever know me neglect my kind old friend? But you do not want me to go this very moment, Nina, do you?"

Again the young slave stood silent for a while before she answered, and looked irresolute and embarrassed, as if she had something on her mind that she wished to express, but for some reason or other did not choose to utter it.

"What are you dreaming about, Nina?" said Annie, laughing. "I do believe, girl, that — you are in love."

Nina shook her head, sighing, however, at the same time so very deeply, that her mistress laughed again, saying,

“Nay, then, it is so, is it, my pretty blacky? Well, Nina, I hope the beloved loves again, and there is no great doubt of that, seeing that you are acknowledged on all hands, you know, to be the beauty of the whole plantation. But he must be a very nice fellow, Nina, or I shall not give my consent.”

“Oh! my Miss Annie!” returned the girl, tears again starting to her eyes, “I wish you would not talk so idly! Go and see good Madam Whitlaw as soon as ever you can. She is a kind lady, and she loves you dearly, Miss Annie; and besides, she knows every thing and every body, and will be likely, if any one can, to—”

Here Nina suddenly stopped short, rapidly turning her eyes away as if to avoid meeting those of her mistress, which were fixed upon her.

“If you are not in love, Nina, you are most certainly gone, or going out of our wits,” said Miss Beauchamp, waving her off. “And if you don’t go away directly, it is very likely that I shall lose mine; for all you do say, is as unintelligible as all you do not say. Besides,

Nina, I tell you I am thinking of something else."

Once again the black girl heaved a very heavy sigh, and then retreated, leaving her mistress less disposed to meditate upon her mystery and her melancholy, than she probably would have been, had she not been, as she said, thinking of something else.

CHAPTER IX.

Big-Gang Bank becomes the scene of much elegant hospitality—An historical personage is introduced—Mrs. Allen Barnaby takes notes—A visit.

THE day following this large influx of visitors at Big-Gang Bank, witnessed the sending off of half a dozen notes containing dinner invitations to the six principal proprietors in the neighbourhood. There was a seventh, concerning whom Mrs. Beauchamp and the colonel differed in opinion.

This seventh great proprietor, within a circle of five miles round Big-Gang Bank, was a certain maiden lady of the name of Whitlaw, the same whom the young slave, Nina, was so anxious her mistress should visit. For many years she had been known in the neighbourhood as Mrs. Clio Whitlaw ; but this singular chris-

tian-name had been dropped on the death of a widowed sister-in-law, and the greatest female landowner in America had now become simply Mrs. Whitlaw.

She was a person of rather eccentric habits, but universally beloved and respected throughout the neighbourhood. Of her origin but little was known, her immense fortune having been left her by a young nephew, who had himself died almost immediately after he had come into possession of it. Some circumstances relating to this nephew, and to the manner in which he both obtained and bequeathed his fortune, became the subject of a narrative published in England some few years ago; but of this notoriety Mrs. Clio Whitlaw was herself wholly unconscious; and so great was the humble simplicity of her character, that she would have thought it greatly more probable that her dog Watch should have been put into a book than herself.

It was on the question of inviting or not inviting this lady, that the colonel and Mrs. Beauchamp now differed; the former being strongly in favour of the measure, and the latter as

strongly against it. A good many *pro* and *con* arguments were uttered on the occasion, which it is unnecessary to repeat, the whole strength of Mrs. Beauchamp's objections resting in the words, "she is too vulgar, colonel, she is indeed, a great deal too vulgar to be introduced to such company as we have got here. Only just think what it would be if Mrs. Allen Barnaby was to describe Miss Clio Whitlaw in her book as a first-rate American lady?"

"Mrs. Allen Barnaby is much too superior-minded a lady to do any such thing, my dear," replied the colonel. "Her thoughts are altogether fixed on the great national question of slaves, or no slaves, and that being the case, there is small chance that she should turn aside from her wise and enlightened reasonings upon this important subject for the sake of writing down the queer ways of Miss Clio."

"That is true, too, colonel, I can't say but what it is," rejoined the lady; "but do only remember the look of her cap, and the make of her gown! and then think of the beautiful dresses of Mrs. Allen Barnaby!"

"And do you, my dear, just think of the

mischief our queer old neighbour is for ever doing by upholding the Christian privileges of the slaves, as she calls them, and of the good chance there may be that the great cleverness that this writing lady brings forward on the subject may work a change in her foolish notions; and then you may just as well remember at the same time, if you please, that nobody ever heard who Mrs. Whitlaw's heirs are to be; and then it may come into your head, perhaps, that it may be best not to affront her by leaving her out."

"Have your own way then, colonel," was hereupon the conclusion of the dialogue, and the invitation to Mrs. Whitlaw was despatched with the rest. During the three days which intervened before the arrival of this first great inaugural dinner-party, the company assembled at Big-Gang Bank amused themselves in various ways, according to their respective inclinations. Mrs. Allen Barnaby walked forth in the cool of the evening with the observant Colonel Beauchamp at her side, and her note-book open in her hand, taking notes upon every object that he pointed out to her especial attention.

“*Perfection of agricultural science,*” were the words inscribed after his showing her how carefully the rice-grounds were kept in order, that the crop, as he coaxingly observed, might be as perfect as it ought to be for the London market; and when they reached the negro village in which the largest portion of his slaves dwelt, and found them all dressed out in their best attire, and dancing away to the squeaking of one of their own fiddles, while all the teeth of all the tribe were displayed by one broad universal grin, he did not think it necessary to mention that this exhibition of excessive gaiety was got up for her especial benefit,—but permitted her to write “none but those who have witnessed the blissful scene with their own eyes, can form an idea of that unequalled moral felicity which is enjoyed by the negro slaves of the United States of America. Their lives are passed in the enjoyment of every blessing that the heart of man can desire.” As sentences such as these became multiplied on her pages, the devotion of the colonel and his lady increased to such a degree, that Major Allen Barnaby, who thought that as a looker-on he saw the very

pith and marrow of the game, began to hint to his lady that it would be a pity not to put the affection of their wealthy hosts to the proof at once, by simply requesting a loan of a couple of thousand pounds or so. The answer he received from his wife upon making this proposal, speaks volumes in honour of the acute nature of feminine observation, when stimulated by the lively light of genius. This answer was preceded by a little laugh, and then followed these words,

“And you really think that the old gentleman would come down with his cash, Donny, do you? Ask him, if you have a mind that the beautiful bubble should burst about your ears at once, and besprinkle you with something more disagreeable than soap-suds; but if you think it as well to let me go on my own way, just let it alone, and take my word for it that as the love of his dear dollars is the beginning and end of his love of me, the asking him to part with them would cure the tender passion at once. I have never seen any body, either at home or abroad, Donny, your own handsome self not excepted, my dear, who seemed to me to dote upon the needful so

heartily as this sleepy colonel. Will you believe me, major, or will you not?"

"I should be a precious great fool, my dear," he replied, "after all that I have seen of you already, should I begin to doubt you now. Have it your own way, my Barnaby, and I will just go quietly on with the piquet. I suspect you are right about his affection for his dollars, for I see he hates losing. But we can't help that, you know; it won't do for us to be here for nothing."

"Oh no! certainly not. I leave that all in your own hands. Of course you don't let luck run against him the whole night. Winning one game is like mixing one little bit of leaven into a whole bushel of dough. He begins every game afterwards under the effects of it, and you must just give him enough to prevent him turning short round upon you, and saying that he had rather not play any more."

The major chucked his wife under the chin, gave her a very satisfactory nod, and so the discussion ended.

The rest of the party managed very tolerably well; what with the novelty of the scene, the

prodigious quantity of eating and drinking, and the extreme hospitality of their entertainers, they contrived to pass those days pleasantly enough. Miss Matilda Perkins was perhaps the only one of the party not exactly satisfied with the change from New Orleans. *There* a vast many gentlemen had felt it was advantageous to be decidedly among the popular English party, even though a little flirtation with Miss Matilda was the price they were obliged to pay for it; but *here* the only single gentleman of the company had most decidedly devoted all his Perkins' partiality to the elder sister, appearing to forget altogether that any such person as the interesting Matilda existed. Tornorino, excepting during the hours in which by special agreement he was in attendance upon his father-in-law, appeared wholly devoted to the pleasant occupations of making himself comfortable, and keeping his wife in good humour; while his lady amused herself much to her heart's content, in demonstrating her conjugal affection, dressing herself in orange blossoms, and watching the odd ways of the blackamoors. And Egerton, how did he amuse himself? Did he philosophize with Mrs. Allen

Barnaby on the admirable effects of slavery, or did he recreate his spirits by playing piquet with the major? No! He was as little inclined for the one occupation as for the other, and actually wasted the time that he might have spent in becoming acquainted with their strongly-marked and peculiarly interesting characters, in silently watching the domestic arrangements of a slave plantation, in conversing on terms a little less hostile than heretofore with Annie, and in making acquaintance with her young slave Nina.

It is impossible to deny that during this process his dislike of the American heiress became considerably less inveterate than it had been during the early part of their acquaintance; but the most important step made towards the removal of this very unamiable feeling was by the lucky discovery that the young lady was not endowed with any accomplishments whatever. She never even hinted at having the slightest intention of taking a degree; and this species of extraordinary humility, together with the discovery of a few other qualities and peculiarities that he certainly rather liked than not, induced him to talk to her a good deal, and to pay her altogether a

good deal of attention. The terms too, on which she seemed to be living with the interesting young girl, whose personal attendance upon her was, as may be observed in all plantation families, greatly more close and intimate than can be found in the same relation elsewhere, the tone of this, and the mutual affection which so evidently existed between them, tended very greatly to remove the feeling of dislike which he had conceived for all slave-holding individuals whatever. One consequence of this was, that he not only talked a good deal to Annie, but to Nina too. This delicately-formed young girl, with her large soft eyes, and beautiful teeth, was certainly as pretty a creature as it was possible for a black girl to be ; and if an individual instance might be taken as proof, her intelligence might have gone far towards settling the disputed question on the power and extent of negro intellect. It is true, indeed, that her mistress's remarkable neglect of all the higher branches of abstract science, had prevented this touchstone from being applied to her powers of mind ; but all that it had been in her power to acquire she had acquired rapidly, and Egerton's carefully culti-

vated acquaintance with her, while it went far towards exonerating Annie herself from the odious stigma which his heart attached to the holding a slave, convinced him more strongly than ever that there was nothing to be found in the nature of the negro race to justify in the slightest degree the atrocious tyranny by which they have been separated from their fellow-creatures, and branded as beings of an inferior race. Nothing is more interesting, when such thoughts and speculations occupy the mind, than a personal investigation of the subject by means of conversing with some individual specimen of this stranger race, whenever accident gives an opportunity, and it was for this reason, as well as for a slight latent wish to know a little more about the mistress, that Frederic Egerton bestowed so large a portion of his attention upon the maid.

The first two or three days of this rather singular *reunion* at Big-Gang Bank were thus passed by the different individuals of which it was composed, all of them perhaps looking forward with more or less curiosity to the enlargement of the circle by the grand dinner-party of which they had pretty constantly heard mention.

It was on the evening of the third day, which had been one of extreme heat, but which, as the sun went down, became delightful by the aid of a gentle breeze that Annie, either moved thereto by the repeated suggestions of her sable monitor, or by her own kind-hearted inclination to be civil to her queer old friend, proposed to the ladies that they should take a walk on the extensive light brown esplanade before the house, which it was the custom of the country to denominate the "lawn." All the party, gentlemen as well as ladies, seemed to relish the proposal exceedingly, and in truth the air at that moment blowing through the open blinds, was such as to tempt the laziest of mortals to a stroll. Not, however, that either the major or his son-in-law would have yielded to the temptation had not Colonel Beauchamp been still fast asleep; but that being the case, they too obeyed the summons of the young lady, and sallied forth with the rest into the portico, rambling onward over the almost crackling surface of the much-scorched lawn.

At the end of the enclosure they reached a gate, upon the latch of which Annie placed her hand, saying to her mother as she did so,

“I will just step over, mamma, if you please, and inquire for Mrs. Whitlaw. I should not like to meet her at dinner till I had called upon her. I will be back again in time to make tea.”

“Why should we not all go, Annie?” returned her mother. “You know the old lady is very fond of being visited by strangers, and I think our friends may like to see the place; it is quite a curiosity in some ways. What say you, gentlemen and ladies?”

“Why as for me, my dear lady,” replied Mrs. Allen Barnaby, to whom Mrs. Beauchamp had seemed to chiefly address herself, “I must confess that in this hot climate I do not feel equal to a great deal of walking. But don’t mind me. I can return alone.”

“My!” exclaimed Mrs. Beauchamp, perfectly frightened at the proposal. “Fancy me letting you walk back alone! I will go back with you, with the very greatest of pleasures; and indeed I never should have thought of your risking your most precious health by a long walk, but Mrs. Whitlaw’s beautiful place isn’t more than ten minutes from this.”

“Oh! well then, we won’t part company,” re-

plied Mrs. Allen Barnaby, obligingly; and thus Annie, considerably to her surprise, and perhaps not very much to her satisfaction, found herself at the head of an invading army of nine persons preparing to make their way into the territory of her old friend, who she well knew was not in the habit, notwithstanding her enormous wealth, of being at all times ready to receive company. But this little embarrassment served the young lady rightly; for she had been plotting, and plotting feebly,—a weakness which generally ensures, and always merits, failure. Had she, when the wish for making this visit seized her, quietly invited her still favoured protégée, Miss Louisa, to accompany her, and only contrived to make the request in the hearing of Mr. Frederic Egerton, there is every reason to suppose that she would have been accompanied to the house of her friend exactly in the manner she wished; but as it was, she had no choice left her but to proceed with her mamma's cortége to penetrate into the peaceful precincts of Portico Lodge.

“We are rather a large party, to be sure,” observed Mrs. Beauchamp, as they proceeded;

“but our Annie is such a favourite that she may do any thing, the odd old lady would never be angry with her. Indeed, the people in the neighbourhood do say,” continued Mrs. Beauchamp with a smile, “that Annie has got a very tolerably good chance of coming in for a share of the great fortune she will leave behind her, for she has not a relation in the world, and it is quite certain that she takes more pleasure in our Annie’s company than in that of any body else. Our girl will be a fine fortune altogether if that should happen.”

Miss Beauchamp was, at the moment when this was spoken, in rather earnest conversation with Mr. Egerton ; but she suddenly stopped, and turning to her mother said, with a good deal of eagerness—

“I wish, mamma, you would never say that again, and likewise that you would never think it. I *know*, as I have often told you before, mamma, that you are mistaken. Mrs. Whitlaw has no relations, but she has friends as dear to her as the very nearest.”

“Well, Annie, you always scold me about it, I know,” replied her mother, laughing: “but

it is not my notion only, but that of every body in the country besides."

"It is rather hard upon her," replied her daughter, colouring, "that she should run the risk of being abused when she dies, for not doing what she never gave the slightest reason to suppose she intended to do while she lived. But do not let us talk any more about such nonsense. Here we are, and there she is, dear good old soul, busy as usual, tying up her darling Virginian creeper to the pillars of the portico."

As strange a figure, perhaps, as was ever looked upon was, in effect, now visible, employed as Annie described, with a huge basket of shreds and nails beside her, a hammer in her hand, and her lanky person stretching itself from the top step of a ladder, which rested against a part of the building. Her head was totally uncovered, save by her own grey hair, and her dress, which was of the richest crimson satin, was tucked up through a pair of pocket holes, leaving distinctly visible two very slender legs, terminated by feet nearly as long as themselves.

Patty, the moment she descried this remarkable figure, burst into a shout of unmitigated laughter; upon which, Mrs. Beauchamp looked vexed, and the eyes of Annie expressed a degree of indignation which immediately suggested to the acute mind of Mrs. Allen Barnaby the necessity of putting some restraint upon their fashionable feelings, in order to conceal the ridicule which must naturally arise in the lively minds of herself and daughter upon the sight of such remote specimens of the natives.

“Do be quiet, Patty!” she exclaimed, in an accent of chiding. “I know very well that you are only laughing at me, just because my foot slipped, I suppose; but because I know it, that is no rule that every body else should, and therefore I beg you’ll be quiet, and not expose yourself by your wild spirits so.”

As Madame Tornorino had fortunately remarked the heightened colour of Mrs. Beauchamp, and understood thereby something of the effect which her vivacity had produced, her mamma escaped the sharp rejoinder she would otherwise have received in return for her admo-

niton ; but Patty, who had a large portion of her female parent's admirable abilities, not only read in the eyes of Annie, and the cheeks of her mother that they were waxing wrath, but remembered with a degree of wisdom almost beyond her years, that she and her Don were just at present living upon the fat of the land, without hearing a word about the costliness of it from her papa and mamma, a variety in their mode of existence that was extremely agreeable ; she therefore immediately ceased laughing, and said—

“My goodness, mamma, I wish you wouldn't tumble about so, it is enough to make the dog laugh. But it is just like you, isn't it? You are so uncommonly fat and clumsy.”

This lively little dialogue brought them to a spot sufficiently near for the sound of their approach to be audible to the lady on the ladder, who turning her head, uttered the national “Oh, my !” and began to descend as rapidly as her declining strength permitted.

“Now this is kind and neighbour-like,” she said, extending both her thin brown hands, one of which was very cordially taken by Mrs. Beauchamp, and the other by Annie.

"I did want to see you again, my pretty dear," she added, smiling kindly upon the latter, "I always think that the place begins to look dismal when you have been a good spell away. And who are all these ladies and gentlemen, Madame Beauchamp? Company from the east I calculate."

"These friends of ours are foreigners, my dear Mrs. Whitlaw," replied Mrs. Beauchamp, "and I have great pleasure in bringing them here, both to show them your beautiful place, and to make you acquainted with them, because I know that you are partial to foreigners."

"I am very glad to see your friends, Mrs. Beauchamp," replied the old lady with great civility; "but I expect the foreigners that you mean were my dear far-away German friends, for I don't much recollect being greatly taken with any other. But now you'll all be pleased to walk in, I hope, and will take some sangaree and cake; and there is whisky and cigars for the gentlemen. And my dear Miss Annie looks prettier than ever, and that's well, and just as it should be."

The party followed her in through the open

French window as she spoke, and seated themselves according to their respective fancies in different parts of the fine large room in which they found themselves, a running accompaniment of welcome from the good lady going on as they did so.

“Pray make yourselves comfortable; take off your bonnets, ladies, if you please, and your caps too, like me, if you wear ’em. There is nothing so nice as the sweet air blowing about overhead. Perhaps that fat lady (pointing to Mrs. Allen Barnaby) would like this very large chair the best? — Oh, my! ma’am! I am afraid you are very hot,” she added, looking towards Miss Matilda Perkins, who, as usual, was fanning herself without intermission; “but that is not the way to be cool, ma’am, I can tell you,” she continued; “you are working a deal too hard, I expect.”

And then she clapped her hands, and two full-grown, and three half-grown negro girls, instantly entered the room.

“Fan the ladies,” said Mrs. Whitlaw; whereupon the little girls and the great girls, placed themselves before the lady visitors, and obeyed

the orders they had received with a steady measured movement of the solace-giving instrument, which was exceedingly delightful to those to whom it was applied.

“How zealously they perform the task,” said Egerton, in a half whisper to Miss Beauchamp. “Is it not a pity that the instrument which their masters apply to their persons in return, should be one productive of as much pain as of pleasure?”

This was said without any fear of giving offence to the fair listener, for the improving acquaintance between the parties had already permitted the subject of negro slavery to be freely discussed.

“The idea of so painful a contrast would not arise here,” replied Annie, in the same low tone, “if you knew a little more of Mrs. Whitlaw. That odd exterior conceals the gentlest, kindest heart that was ever given to mortal. She would be much more likely to let her slaves flog her, than suffer any one else to flog them.”

“And this is the reason why you love her,” said Egerton.

Annie coloured a little, for she knew that

he alluded to a discussion in which she had thought proper to utter a few sentences in mitigation of the unqualified reprobation he had expressed against the hateful institution; but she smiled too, as she answered,

“ I love her for every thing she does, for every thing has so much self-forgetting kindness in it, that I sometimes think she is sent on earth with that uncaptivating exterior on purpose to show us that we are compound animals, and that beauty and ugliness may both be met in perfection, in the same individual.”

“ And beauty and goodness in another,” he was tempted to reply, as his eye rested upon her; but he did not, and only said, in an accent of very philosophical composure,

“ You really make me long to know her, Miss Beauchamp. How can I begin a conversation with her?”

“ Talk to her about that beautiful plant that you saw her nailing up,” replied Annie. The obedient young man immediately left her side, and approaching the lady of the mansion, said to her with the air of taking much interest in the subject,

“ Will you be so kind, Mrs. Whitlaw, as to tell me the name of the beautiful plant you were so carefully leading in the way it ought to go? It is the most elegant creeper I ever saw.”

“ Yes, indeed sir, it is a beauty of a plant,” replied the old lady, following him into the portico; “ but it is only what we call the Virginian trumpet. It is not only its beauty, you must know, that makes me forbid any of my poor nigger creatures to touch it, and that I always do everything to it with my own hands. There is a story, sir, belonging to this plant, that makes every bell that hangs upon it something precious to me.”

“ I wish you would tell me the story,” said Egerton, with a good-humoured smile.

“ It might be made a long one,” replied Mrs. Whitlaw with a sigh, “ but I’ll make it short for you, sir. The root of this very ’dential plant that you see growing here, sir, I grubbed up years ago from the smouldering walls of a house that was wickedly burnt to the ground, but that had seen some of my very happiest hours within its walls. I used then

to think it a perfect wonder of a place in the way of handsomeness,—though I have found out now that it was just nothing of all that; but this makes no difference in my love, as I look back to it, for it wasn't the place, but the people. They were a set of angels, that's a fact, and the one of them that I loved the dearest, and that used to tend the parent of this tree with her own pretty hands, was as beautiful as the young lady as you came here with, sir, and I don't need to say any thing more about her beauty, did I, sir?" concluded the narrator with a smile.

"And do you trace any resemblance between the two young ladies in the qualities of their minds, as well as in the beauty of their persons?" demanded Egerton, but without, however, looking very steadily in the face of the person he addressed.

"Resemblance in their minds?" repeated Mrs. Whitlaw, "meaning, likeness in their goodness, and kindness, and all that? Oh my! one might think you knew 'em both, sir, by having such a thought in your head. Yet they are not just that alike in all ways neither; for

my Lotte was the merriest, happiest-hearted little beauty that ever my eyes looked upon, and this pretty dear is often quite the other way as to merriness, being very often altogether the contrary. She never said as much to me, but I've often jealoused that she didn't like having all the poor harmless, black niggers made slaves of. But this I should never have found out, to understand it rightly, if I had not been used to listen so, as I did, to my dear kind friends, the Steinmarks, and Madam Mary, who was an Englisher, sir, like yourself."

"Indeed?" said Frederic Egerton, almost starting; "you think, madam, that Miss Beauchamp is unhappy, is melancholy, because she is surrounded by slaves?"

"Yes, I do, sir," replied the old lady, looking up in his face with a good-humoured twinkle of the eye, that seemed to indicate that she knew he liked to hear as much. "And I can tell you, easy, why that makes a difference between her and Lotte, just in the very thing where there is no difference at all. But the thing is this, you see, sir: Miss Lotte Steinmark hated and abominated the very name of slavery,

and was as gay as a lark, because she comed from a country where there was no such a thing ever known or heard of, and she could boast of it, pretty thing, for all was free as waited on them here, and she could sing, dance, and be merry. While this dear child, being an American citizen born, and bound in course not to fault any thing, little or big, that she sees in her own glorious native land, seems often, I think, ready to break her heart, because all the people about her, the hard-hearted lookers and all, I expect, are not quite so merciful and good as herself. And the case is the harder, you see, sir, because both her pa and ma, who worship the very ground she treads upon, are altogether going the whole hog in the contrary direction. And how can a young thing like that do any thing in such a matter, when all the great landholders round, except my poor old self, perhaps, would burn her alive, as soon as look at her, if they did but guess what was passing in her poor little heart."

Rarely have words produced a stronger or more instantaneous effect than did this speech of the venerable Mrs. Clio Whitlaw upon

the mind of young Frederic Egerton. It was as if some hard and impassable barrier had been removed, that had hitherto kept him, despite his growing inclination to overcome it, at a chilling distance from the young American, and had no eyes been there to check such a demonstration of feeling, it is likely enough that he would have fallen on his knees before her, confessed all his unjust aversion, together with some other feelings of rather a contrary kind, and implored her forgiveness on the spot. But this being impossible, the young man contented himself for the present by so placing himself beside one of the pillars of the portico, as to gaze on the innocent young face, whose influence he had so stoutly resisted, without being remarked even by the sharp bright eyes of Miss Patty.

“It is a pretty shady bit, isn’t it, sir?” said Mrs. Whitlaw, looking at him complacently, “and I hope you’ll come up and enjoy it whenever you like to take a stroll from Big-Gang Bank. Isn’t that an unlucky name, sir, after what I have been a telling you? I’ll lay a piccinne to a cent, young gentleman, that pretty

Annie will free every nigger upon the estate, and then sell every acre of it, and be off to some right-down free country, as soon as ever it comes into her hands. But I musn't stay talking to you any more now, sir, or Madam Beauchamp will think I don't know what's what."

And so saying, she began disengaging the skirt of her rich satin dress from the pocket-holes, an operation which she had hitherto neglected, and having succeeded in completing it, returned into the saloon.

Though Frederic Egerton once more found himself by the side of Annie during their homeward walk, he was, instead of being more communicative, considerably more silent than usual. How could he find words to tell her that he adored her because her principles and feelings were in direct opposition to those of her parents? That his heart was ready to swear allegiance to her for ever, because he had made the fortunate discovery that the most important feature in the constitution of the country she had been taught to venerate as the most perfect upon earth, was as hateful to her as to him? It was impossible. The conversation between them, therefore, visibly

languished; Egerton perpetually relapsing into silence, after every effort made by his beautiful companion to renew the conversation.

The result of this memorable excursion was, that the young Englishman returned to the house of his American entertainers with a fund of hope and happiness at the bottom of his heart which rendered him, despite his grave exterior, one of the most enviable men in the world; while Annie stole early to her rest with every feeling crushed, every unacknowledged, but most precious hope destroyed. A process greatly similar to what had now taken place in Egerton's mind, had somewhat more rapidly taken place in hers. Though it was quite true that she hated the institution of slavery, Annie loved her country with that species of instinctive filial feeling which it is a sin to be without, and having been taught, very erroneously, to believe that all English people disliked, and what was much worse, despised all Americans, her first feelings towards the young man were quite as hostile as those of the young man towards her. But it was impossible to converse with Frederic Egerton, without perceiving that no such un-

reasonable assumption of superiority as she had believed inseparable from the English character, made any part of his. She had discovered that what he most hated and condemned was what she most hated and condemned also ; and the feeling of having done him injustice, had for some time been acting upon her mind, exactly as it was now acting upon his ; giving to every good gift a double power to charm, and bringing justice to act side by side with inclination, in amending the judgment she had first put upon him. But it was only when she saw, or thought she saw, that he liked her greatly less than she liked him, that she became aware how important his opinion had become to her. There was disappointment as well as mortification in the discovery, for she had thought the case was different. But it was sorrow, without any mixture of anger, that she felt upon making it. She was much better calculated to be a proud patriot than a haughty woman ; and would have given infinitely more, could she have honestly said that she believed her country right on all the points in which it differed from its parent stock, than to hear it acknowledged by the whole world,


en masse, that she was the loveliest lady in it. Drooping, heavy-hearted, and self-condemning, but with no shadow of resentful feeling against Egerton, the beautiful American laid her young head upon her pillow and wept herself to sleep, while the Englishman lay awake, till night gave place to morning, in meditating how, when, and where, he should confess to her that all his future hopes of happiness depended on her consenting to forsake the glories of the Stars and the Stripes, and accept as an atonement for the sacrifice, his heart, his hand, a noble settlement, and the alliance of an ancient English race, whose motto might very honestly have been,

Sans peur, et sans reproche.

CHAPTER X.

A magnificent dinner-party—The health of Mrs. Allen Barnaby is drank—Various albums are produced, in which the heroine inscribes sentiments and autographs.

THE next day brought together the first-rate, high-standing, sharp, elegant, clever, and tip-top fashionable society that was to constitute the dinner-party invited by Colonel and Mrs. Beauchamp, to meet their illustrious European guest. This act of assembling together seemed a very solemn business: nobody, as the circle increased, appeared to think it decorous, or proper, to smile. The gentlemen compressed their lips, spat, and bowed their heads. The ladies made small courtesies, looked grave, and carefully arranged their robes, taking particular care that their drapery should float gracefully on one side

only of their persons, according to the hint communicated by a sitting figure in full dress, conveyed to the country in the last number of the *Magasin des Modes*. 

At length, however, the whole party being assembled, and as much iced-water and whisky made away with as the season required, Mrs. Colonel Beauchamp thought it advisable, before the dinner was announced, to introduce "Mrs. Major Allen Barnaby" in form, to them all. The scene produced by this was very striking, for there was not a single person present who did not know the obligations she was about to lay them under, and their gratitude bore a very amiable proportion to the benefit which they considered her likely to confer upon them. There are few women who could have gone through this scene with such a perfection of "unblenched majesty," as did Mrs. Allen Barnaby. Had the nature of her forthcoming work, as proclaimed and explained to all, been merely that of a complimentary effusion, extolling the excellences of the country, political, moral, intellectual, physical, and fashionable, and declaring it to be in all these particulars, and

every other she could think of, greatly “ahead” of all the other countries in the world, the sensation produced would have been much less vehement. They might have been pleased, probably they would have been very much pleased,—but the profound consciousness resting in the inmost recesses of every bosom, that all this was not a bit more than their due, and that, however good her intentions might be, she must be a darnation smart lady indeed, if she could write up to the pitch they deserved: this consciousness, though it might increase their satisfaction in the contemplation of what she was about to do, would naturally lessen their gratitude, for they would have felt not only that it was no more than their just right, but moreover that it could not by possibility be sufficient to atone for all the European injustice which had preceded it. But the circumstances of the present case were altogether different. The *especial* point she had *especially* undertaken to advocate, was one on which they felt their weakness, while it was that which, ten thousand times beyond all others, they hung upon with a desperate fondness made up of pride, prejudice,

the most ardent love of wealth, and the most craven terror of losing it.

“A present Deity” they shout around,

“A present Deity” the *plastered walls* resound,

would be nothing beyond a very fair quotation to exemplify what actually passed on this occasion; and nothing short of the majestic strength of mind with which my heroine was endowed could have enabled her to sustain any appearance of composure under the enthusiastic plaudits which showered upon her head.

How long this might have lasted had dinner not been announced, it is impossible to say, but the flattering clamour was still at its height when the folding-doors of the saloon were thrown open, and a crowd of gaily-dressed negroes outside it gave notice, by their universal grin, that the pleasant business of dining might begin when the company pleased.

This put an instant stop, for the time at least, to the performance of the chorus of adulation which the party had been performing, and the ceremony of marshalling the guests into the

dinner-parlour was performed with as little delay as possible.

Though for the most part the brilliant company assembled on this occasion were rather better pleased than usual with themselves and each other, and very fully inclined to do every kind of justice to the splendid hospitality of their entertainers, there were one or two individuals out of the twenty that sat down to table, who would considerably have preferred being elsewhere.

Old Mrs. Whitlaw was one of these. Notwithstanding some trifling deficiencies in this old lady's early education, she had profited, with great natural acuteness, by all the various scenes through which her singular destiny had led her, and was more capable, perhaps, of forming a clear-headed judgment upon the state of affairs in her own particular sphere, than most of her neighbours. Though her views were not sufficiently enlarged for her never to have contemplated very distinctly the absolute abolition of slavery as a national measure, she had long felt persuaded that the way in which the "nigger work," as she called it, was carried on, would

not answer in the long run. Once or twice, on her first taking possession of the mansion she now inhabited, which was her favourite among several which she inherited,—once or twice she had hinted to some of her rich neighbours, that she thought it would be better, “for a good many reasons,” if they would relax a little the severity of their discipline; but this was in every case received with such vehemence of indignation that the same straightforward common sense which had suggested her observations, very speedily determined her to keep them for the future to herself; and for several years past her pretty strong opinions on the subject had only manifested themselves in the management of her own people, and in occasional confidential *tête-à-têtes* with her young friend Annie. Her own avoidance of all discussion on the subject with her neighbours, had been followed by the same sort of discretion on their parts, and it was now several years since the old lady had heard the subject alluded to in general conversation at all.

Great wealth, for which there is no certain heir, generally produces great consideration to

the possessor, and Mrs. Whitlaw had profited by this, more than she was herself aware of; she would otherwise, perhaps, have been less shocked and surprised by the vehemence with which, for the purpose of enlightening Mrs. Allen Barnaby, the increase of severity in discipline was insisted upon by some of the party present as the only mode of averting the mischief which some speculators had threatened, from the rapid increase of the negro population. The old lady got fidgetty, and was debating in her own mind whether she should not say that she thought the dinner had made the room rather over-hot, and that she did not feel over-well, when the project of escape was put out of her head by a glance and a smile which she saw hastily and furtively exchanged between two of the sable attendants.

It is so universally the custom, wherever slaves make part of an establishment, to treat them as if they were literally stocks and stones, incapable of hearing or of seeing any thing said or done before them, that in this case, as in many others, the subject of their own condition was as freely discussed while they were serving

at table, as if no such animals had been in the room.

Old Mrs. Whitlaw was too much used to this mode of proceeding for the uncomfortable feelings she experienced to have been produced or even increased by their presence, and it was purely by accident that her eyes had been directed towards the men between whom the above-mentioned look and smile had been exchanged. But the moment she saw it, a strong feeling of suspicion arose in her mind, that one of those movements of resistance which occasionally startle slave-holders, and which act with the frightful but useless energy of a limb convulsed by intolerable pain, was approaching among the slaves of Colonel Beauchamp, and the old lady would have given pretty considerably many dollars, could she at that very moment have transported herself into the midst of her own slaves, for the purpose of having a little confidential conversation with them. But as this was impossible, she resolved to sit still and quietly look on.

Another individual to whom the splendid banquet, and the popular theme discussed around

it, produced a degree of suffering that it required some philosophy to endure, was Annie. No opportunity during the whole of that long morning had occurred for any thing to pass between Frederic Egerton and herself which could persuade her that the conclusion to which she had come the evening before respecting him was erroneous.

It was not that she doubted his admiration of her,—that would certainly have been difficult, inasmuch as every glance of his eyes betrayed it; for the fascination of her beauty rendered the not looking at her a task, which, however often resolved upon, he found it impossible to perform. Annie was not wholly unconscious of this; but a profound conviction that his having seen her surrounded by slaves, and an agent, however innocently, in the degradation of the race whom, she well knew, he considered in all respects as the equal children of the same Almighty Father, had taken possession of her mind; she considered herself as one stigmatized in his eyes by a blot that could never be removed, and all her energy of mind was now turned to the task of avoiding him as much

as possible at present, and forgetting him wholly when he was no longer near. But it was impossible, even for the furtherance of this very desirable object, for Annie to leave the room while the dinner lasted, she too, therefore, submitted to endure its heat and its noise, giving no other indication that she was ill at ease, than the somewhat more than common paleness of her cheek betrayed.

So the party went on with every appearance of universal satisfaction; Mrs. Allen Barnaby's health was drunk, and prosperity to planters and plantations, toasted with three times three. And then the ladies retired, they having remained thus long solely in compliment to the heroine of the fête; a compliment which was acknowledged by Mrs. Allen Barnaby's drawing forth from her bag her little note-book, and very evidently employing herself by inscribing therein some of the wise and very sublime maxims which had been uttered by the gentlemen present.

On re-entering the drawing-room, the most consequential ladies of the party immediately crowded around her, beseeching that she would

favour them with her autograph, or if it were possible with a few words written in their albums. This was the first time that such a request had ever been made to our heroine, except in her dreams; and the graceful manner in which she bowed and smiled her acquiescence was really admirable. This very gracious and ready compliance with her wishes was no sooner made known, than nearly every lady present flew to the secret corner in which on entering she had deposited her receptacle for wit; which, in fact, every lady who arrived that day had done, with the exception of Mrs. Whitlaw (who had, as she candidly confessed, no taste whatever for learning); and having drawn it thence, speedily surrounded the illustrious authoress with a perfect galaxy of brilliant volumes, red, green, blue, and yellow, each in succession eagerly spread open before her to receive the valued ornament of her name.

On the first page offered to her, Mrs. Allen Barnaby modestly inscribed that name and nothing more; but perceiving a look of disappointed hope in the countenance of the fair lady who had presented it, she (not manfully,

but) womanfully called upon her genius to help her, and resolutely determined, notwithstanding the multitude of the rain-bow volumes around her, that every one of them should bear witness of her extraordinary talents.

With a charming smile she drew again towards her the book in which she had written her name, and wrote above it,

Immortal country, hail !

Finding by the universal "My !" which broke in various notes of admiration from the fair petitioners, that this was exactly the sort of thing they wanted, she continued in the same strain till her task was accomplished. She found no difficulty whatever in producing the slight degree of variety which she deemed necessary, and one lady carried away with her the novel phrase—

Success to the Stripes and the Stars !

another,

The extinguisher of the Old World and the candle of the
New !—

THE UNION.

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This conceit brought down another shower of the same eloquent monosyllables, and "Oh, my!" resounded through the room. It is not necessary to indite every *tour de force*, by which Mrs. Allen Barnaby proved her powers of contemporary composition, for though all admirable, they were, it must be confessed, exceedingly alike in sentiment if not in expression; but in the last, she seemed indeed to surpass herself, and greater than ever was the delight manifested when the happy owner of the last album presented, read aloud these words:

May lawful slavery survive, as long as the sun and moon
endureth!

It may easily be imagined, that upon the gentlemen making their appearance, they were immediately made to share in the pleasure which these various inscriptions were so well calculated to produce, and once again Mrs. Allen Barnaby found herself the object of admiration which amounted to enthusiasm.

As soon as the expression of their feelings had in some degree subsided, Colonel Beau-

champ observed that their having met with the most admirable lady in Europe, was no good cause why his sporting neighbours should not be indulged with their usual game at whist, or Boston ; a hint which immediately led to the summoning sundry negroes, and setting forth sundry card-tables.

While these arrangements were making, Major Allen Barnaby wandered about the room making conversation, of which a jocose sort of sketch respecting his own caprices about playing at cards formed the principal theme. He laughed heartily, as he declared, that it often and often happened to him, that he could not make up his mind to think of any single rule of playing, and hardly to know one card from another ; while at another time, if the humour seized him, he could go on at it four-and-twenty hours together, and never feel tired a bit.

“ Well, sir,” was the reply from one grandee to whom these little personal peculiarities were revealed, “ we must hope that the humour may be on you this evening ; for there are two or three here, that never find themselves in com-

pany, without choosing to have a go against the four aces."

Two tables were speedily made up, at one of which two ladies took their places and the stakes were fixed at a moderate sum; at the other, four gentlemen were to play, and at this table, the fixing the stakes was left to themselves.

"Which party will you join, Major Allen Barnaby?" demanded Colonel Beauchamp, adding very politely—"In course, sir, as a stranger, we should one and all be happy, I expect, to leave the fix to your own choice, putting out of sight our complaisance to your excellent lady."

Out of the four other gentlemen about to sit down, two appeared rather anxious that the whimsical major, to whose account of himself they had been listening, should take his place with the ladies, and one of them said bluntly,

"It would hardly be fair, Major Allen Barnaby, sir, to let you, with the careless ways you talk about, sit down at this table; because I, for one, always play a pretty considerable brisk stake."

"That's the only way to keep me awake, sir,"

replied the major, laughing. "Men in our profession, as I dare say you know, have generally a few thousands of loose cash floating on purpose to give them a little excitement now and then, when they get a trifle sleepy in their quarters. I have run up and down, for my part, from about ten thousand to nothing, and back again, above a score of times since I began ; and I find it has come so even in the long-run, that I care very little how high I play. But I never," he added, in a low voice, "I never play with ladies, it puts me out altogether."

This decided the matter, and Major Allen Barnaby, Colonel Beauchamp, and two other gentlemen settled themselves round a table in a quiet corner, as gentlemen do settle themselves when they are going to amuse themselves in earnest.

Had Annie Beauchamp remained in the room, it is likely enough that the hours of that long evening might have offered opportunities to Egerton too favourable to be neglected, for the making her comprehend a little better than she did at present, what were his wishes, his hopes, his intentions concerning her ; but, with the

blindness of a perverse little mortal, she saw nothing of what was passing in his head or his heart, and she thought of nothing but the silence that had come over him on the preceding evening, when, as she confessed to herself with shame that amounted to agony, she was waiting for every word which might fall from his lips, as if her fate hung upon it. The recollection of these past feelings, together with the blank disappointment which had succeeded them, was more than she could bear any longer *en plein salon*, and begging her mother to apologize to the ladies for her absence, by telling them that she had so bad a headach as to oblige her to go to bed, she stole away, taking with her, as it seemed to Frederic Egerton, all that portion of light which could make it worth while for him to keep his eyes open, and for a few moments after he had watched her retreat, and listened to her mother's explanation of it, he meditated the commission of a similar act of self-indulgence. But he luckily recollected that his doing so would neither be particularly polite nor particularly discreet; and he therefore abandoned the project; the more readily, perhaps, because he happened to observe

Don Tornorino move quietly away from the place he occupied beside his lady, and station himself at no great distance from his respected father-in-law, about whom he revolved with the same graceful air of nonchalance which had once before attracted his attention.

CHAPTER XI.

The Major communicates rather an important secret to his lady—She proves herself to be the best of wives, and the cleverest of women—The Barnabys and family leave Big-Gang Bank—The Miss Perkinses remain behind.

“MY dear,” said Major Allen Barnaby, on waking the morning after Colonel Beauchamp’s dinner party, “I am afraid I won rather too much last night.”

“Won too much? What can you mean, good man?” replied his wife, rousing herself from sleep that had produced many delightful dreams. “Does your tender conscience reproach you, my Donny? If so, make over your winnings to me, and the generosity shall atone for—for whatever you reproach yourself with, my dear.”

"I don't think it would answer," he returned, in a tone rather too grave for jesting. "The thirst which gets hold of one in this hateful climate forces a man to drink, whether he will or no, and I have a sort of confused recollection of having got rather excited last night, and going it, may be, a trifle too fast."

"Mercy on me! I hope you did no such thing!" she replied, looking a good deal alarmed. "Just think of the horror of having our beautiful smooth-sailing here spoilt by such a piece of folly as that!"

"Think of it? I can't bear to think of it," said he. "Our only hope is that the others were in the same condition as myself, and will recollect nothing very clearly. But tell me," he added, "wasn't that stiff young Egerton buzzing about me all the time? He looks like one that might be as dry as Etna before he'd ever think of recruiting himself by a dram. Wasn't he hanging about the table, wife? I have a confused sort of notion of having been bothered by it."

"He did nothing the whole evening but watch the players," she replied, looking consi-

derably alarmed. "If this is to be the Curzon-street business over again, what is to become of us?"

"Don't lose your courage, my dear," said he, with a degree of composure that he thought was well calculated to reassure her, "if things don't prosper here, we must go ahead, as the natives say."

"It may be easier to say than to do, Major Allen," she replied, not a little provoked by the indifference with which he appeared ready to sacrifice all the advantages which she had obtained with so much ability. "You may go ahead, as you call it, with such a stone thrown after you, as may pretty speedily bring you to a stand still."

"Very likely, my dear ; especially if you get a fancy to forget the name I ought to go by. I must beg you won't take to calling me Major Allen, Mrs. Barnaby, or mischief will be sure to come of it. But don't let you and I quarrel, wife. It is too late in the day for either of us to profit by that now. I think we had better change our quarters, I won't deny that ; but I dare say that your cleverness will find out some

excuse for doing it, that will set all right again. That is to say, if we once fairly get off; for I won't stay, mind that, if you please, so don't waste your wit in trying to contrive it."

"Good Heaven! have you really brought matters to such a pass as that, major?" said the unfortunate lady, her eyes flashing and her cheeks becoming redder than ever rouge made them. "What a return for all my enormous exertions for you! And such unequalled success, too! It is enough to drive one mad!"

"Not enough to drive such a woman as you are, mad, my charming Barnaby," said he, with a coaxing smile. "Besides, my dear, you have never yet asked how much this rather bold winning may amount to. If we get clear off with it, that may make some considerable difference, I promise you."

"What difference," said she, "can it make to me, sir, I should like to know? You have taken care to keep your winnings pretty snugly to yourself, you will please to remember; whereas I have been labouring, as you well know, to make the great and *honourable* celebrity I have obtained as advan-

tageous to you as myself, and this is the return I get for it."

To do my heroine justice, she was not a weeping lady; but at this moment, and especially as she pronounced the word *honourable*, which not only set off with great effect the indiscreet proceedings of her spouse, but brought fresh upon her memory the delightful feelings with which she had listened to the demands for her autograph, at this moment tears certainly started to her eyes, and she seemed determined to make the most of them, blowing her nose a good deal, and even producing at intervals something very like a sob.

Major Allen Barnaby had left his bed when this conversation began, and had been employing himself from the moment he had thrown on his dressing-gown in the necessary operation of shaving, but upon observing the condition of his wife, and at the same time feeling the force of the words she had spoken, he laid aside the instrument which he was employing upon his chin, walked across the room to the spot where he had deposited the garments he had worn the night before, and extracting his pocket-book from the

receptacle in which it was lodged, walked back again to the bed, and laid it unopened on her pillow.

“There, my dear,” he said, as he quietly renewed his shaving; “there! you never had that little book in your hands before, to the best of my knowledge and belief; and now I recommend you to dry your handsome eyes, and look at it. It is just the first packet you will come to that you will find the most worthy of observation.”

The mind of my admirable heroine was not formed to dissolve in watery woe at such a moment as this. She instantly sat up in bed, opened the pocket-book, and obeying exactly the instructions she had received, came upon a packet of exceedingly dirty papers, among which however was one little scrap newly written upon, and looking like a bit of first-rate letter-paper. The dirty papers were, as the lady well knew, uncleanly thumbed bank-notes, and their whole amount was seven hundred and eighty dollars, but the scrap of letter-paper was worth them all put together, and a pretty considerable bit of money besides; being an order, payable at sight,

upon a bank at Washington, and signed "Themistocles Joseph John Hapford," a name already well known to the attentive ears of Mrs. Allen Barnaby as that of a senator of first-rate standing, a very wealthy planter, and lastly, as one of the brilliant company who had been invited to meet them on the preceding day. The paper thus satisfactorily inscribed might, therefore, be fairly estimated at the value indicated by the figures it bore, which amounted to the pleasant sum of one thousand five hundred and fifty dollars. For a moment the countenance of Mrs. Allen Barnaby became radiant, but in the next it faded again, and she exclaimed with a deep sigh,

"Yes, Donny, yes! This might atone for much! but what did you find the paper you got in Curzon-street worth?"

"I don't wonder it should come into your head, my dear," replied her husband: "but I am happy to say that we have a considerably better chance this time. I am sure, my dear, that I shall be as sorry as you can be to take you away from all the honour and renown that you are so cleverly making for yourself here, and indeed I shan't think of doing it, whatever I

may be obliged to do myself, if upon reflection you prefer remaining behind. But the state of the case is this—I remember it all perfectly now that I have dipped my head in cold water, and set about recollecting a little—the state of the case is this, my Barnaby: the bank-notes that you find there, were lost between Colonel Beauchamp and his other playing friend, Judge Wilkins, who lives close by; but the draught came, as you see, from Mr. Hapford, who drove above fifteen miles to his own house, after the table broke up, that I well remember, for there was a deal of talking about wanting him to stay. Well now, it strikes me, that the only safe thing for me to do, is to declare this morning that either you, or I, or Tornorino (Patty must know nothing about it) but some one of us three must be taken ill with a terrible complaint that we have perhaps been long used to, and set off, without losing a moment, bag and baggage, to look for the best medical assistance. We may promise to come back again, you know, and so we can, if we like it; that is to say, if nothing comes of what passed last night, besides the quiet cashing of this neat check. Half

of that whole sum of two thousand three hundred and fifty dollars I mean to present to you, Mrs. Allen Barnaby, for your own particular use and benefit, to make up to you for any inconvenience which this accident may have occasioned."

These last words were pronounced with a low bow, performed at the bottom of the bed, where the major stood wiping his razor upon the sleeve of his dressing-gown, while his eyes were fixed with a slight expression of anxiety upon the august countenance of his wife. He had, however, no longer anything to fear in that quarter; the noble generosity of purpose which he thus announced, not only stifled every sentiment of anger, but created an emotion of admiration which in her generous heart left room for no other.

"You may at times be thoughtless and indiscreet, my dear major," she replied, in a tone of deep feeling, "but there is a fund of just and honourable delicacy about you, sufficient to redeem a thousand such trifling errors. I accept your present as frankly as it is offered, and will not deny that it is as just as it is generous; for

the blunder you have made has certainly stopped me short in a very glorious career. Not that I mean to abandon my project, observe. It is much too well imagined, and has in fact already been far too successful to be given up. However, we need not talk about that now; I shall be able to manage the bringing it forward again, I dare say. What we must think of now, my dear Donny, is how to get off with flying colours here: and that too, I dare say I shall be able to manage; your generous conduct will inspire me with spirit to get through it all. But it is I who must be sick, major. I should not like, my dear, to see you undertake such a troublesome job. All you need do, is to be in a dreadful agony of terror about me, and insist upon having me removed to some of the great cities directly—you understand?"

"Oh! yes, my dear, I understand most perfectly well, you may depend upon it, and the only improvement I can suggest is, that whatever city we decide upon going to before we set out, we should hear something as we go along that should make us change our minds and send us to another."

Mrs. Allen Barnaby looked grave.

“Indeed ! Was the circumstance that occurred last night so—so very much out of the common way ?” said she.

Her husband laughed.

“Why no, my dear,” he replied, “I can’t say that it was anything very extraordinary ; but it is always impossible to say, you know, how a joke of that kind may be taken by strangers. Some people think a good deal of it, while others again treat it quite lightly. But we ought to be prepared for the worst. If I can but get that bit of paper honoured however, I shall care very little what any of the folks in this nasty, frizzing, frying, burnt-up, negro-driving country, may think, or feel, on the subject. We have nothing to do but keep moving, my dear, and I have a notion that you and I, between us, may snap our fingers at the whole world.”

“All I can say in return, major, is, that we must do our best,” replied the lady, with an encouraging smile. “And now, my dear,” she continued, “set off directly, catch hold of one of the blackymoors, and send in word to madam’

that you must beg to speak to her without delay. She won't keep you waiting, you may depend upon it, and, when you see her, just look and speak as a devoted husband ought to do when he thinks himself in danger of losing the best of wives, and then send her to me, and you shall find everything beautifully arranged for our setting off in the twinkling of an eye."

"How many more times shall I have to tell you that you were born for me?" cried the major, suddenly saluting her with all the fervour of young affection; "though I can never hope to equal you in any thing," he added, "you shall see at least that your example is not altogether lost. If I do not enact the agonised husband with spirit, then never trust me again. But upon my soul, my Barnaby, I shall only have to fancy that the thing is real in order to be in cue for acting despair to perfection."

This tender assurance was received with a very charming smile, and then the fond husband tore himself away, to perform the part assigned him. This part, as it speedily appeared, was instantly acted by the alert major, and with un-

doubted success ; for almost before Mrs. Allen Barnaby had time to arrange everything about her in proper order for her own part of the drama, her door was opened with a hurried and agitated hand, and Mrs. Beauchamp stood before her.

Short as the interval had been, however, Mrs. Allen Barnaby had found time to wash all traces of rouge from her cheeks, and the effect of this to one who had never seen her but in the fullest bloom, was really startling.

“ Oh my ! ” exclaimed the terrified lady of the mansion, to whom the idea of yellow fever had immediately suggested itself,—“ oh my ! you are sick, sure enough ! My dear, dear lady, I’ll send off to Euripedesville this very moment, for it is there that bides the smartest doctor we have. Only think of your being caught so, all of a minute ! I’ll come again in no time,” she added, turning towards the door ; “ but first before every thing we must send for the doctor.” A low groan indicative of the very severest suffering, arrested her steps. “ Oh dear ! oh dear ! I do believe she’s dying already ! ” exclaimed the terrified Mrs. Beau-

champ, wringing her hands, and then flying to the bell she rang it violently.

“Come to me!” murmured the sufferer, “oh come to me, my dearest friend, and let me speak one word to you.”

Delighted to find that so much strength was left, Mrs. Beauchamp hastened to obey her, but before she could reach the side of the bed where she lay, half-a-dozen woolly heads appeared at the door to answer the bell.

“Shall I tell the creturs to get you a hot bath, my dear?” said the kind hostess, hanging over her.

“No, no, no,” groaned Mrs. Allen Barnaby, “only send them away, and let me speak to you for one single moment alone.”

The wish was instantly obeyed, the slaves dismissed, the door closed, and Mrs. Beauchamp hanging over the bed to catch the slightest sound.

Mrs. Allen Barnaby now appeared to make a strong effort to enable herself to speak intelligibly, and then said, lowly and slowly, but with perfect distinctness,

“My friend, I am poisoned!”

Mrs. Beauchamp's only reply was a piercing shriek.

"Compose, yourself, my dearest friend, compose yourself, I entreat you," resumed the invalid, "let me be but prompt in what I have to say, and what I have to do, and I may yet be saved!"

"Speak then, speak, my dearest lady," returned poor Mrs. Beauchamp, with tears running down her cheeks, "and I will obey you to the very smallest particular."

On receiving this assurance, Mrs. Allen Barnaby raised herself by a great effort in her bed, in order to make what she was about to say more distinctly audible, and then, though occasionally interrupted by pangs which caused her to groan terribly, she said,

"Yes, my friend, it is but too certain that I am poisoned. Among the many studies to which I have given attention, the effect of poisons is one, and this enables me—oh! h! h! —to tell you with the most perfect certainty that I am now suffering from the effect of some mineral poison administered about twelve or fourteen hours ago. That some revengeful

slave, or slaves have done this, I have not, in fact there cannot be, the slightest doubt. I am the victim of my principles. Nor shall I regret it, even if death overtakes me, provided I am assured that you, my dear Mrs. Beauchamp, and those you most value and esteem—oh! h! h!—shall do me justice.”

It is impossible to describe the agony of feeling into which these words threw poor Mrs. Beauchamp; but Mrs. Allen Barnaby suddenly checked all expression of it by saying, with all the energy of lingering hope,

“Then save me! Save me by instantly lending me a carriage and horses to convey me to a steamboat that shall take me with the least possible loss of time to New York. Fortunately I have an antidote, which indeed I have already taken, that will for many days so far check the action of the poison as to give me hope of life if I can reach that city; for somewhere amongst my effects, I have the address of a practitioner there who is greatly celebrated, even in London, for his skill in cases of poison. Will you do this for me, Mrs. Beauchamp, and without an hour’s delay?”

“ Will I ? ” exclaimed the good lady, running towards the door, “ oh ! what is there I would not do ? ” And she was out of sight in a moment.

The affectionate major, whose anxiety naturally kept him hovering at the threshold, entered the room as Mrs. Beauchamp quitted it, and carefully closing the door approached the bed and directed an inquiring glance towards his wife.

“ I am very bad indeed, my dear,” she said, as her black eye twinkled laughingly up to his. “ I am poisoned, major, please to observe that. I am poisoned by the wicked slaves who have found out my principles ; so of course every thing ought to be done that can be done to get me out of their way, and within reach of a certain learned man at New York, who I happen to know cures poisoned folks to a miracle.”

“ But, my dear,” returned the major, looking very grave, “ do you remember how many days’ journey it is between this place and New York ? How is it possible that you should survive till you get there ? ”

"How sweetly anxious you are for me!" returned his lady, tenderly. "But don't be alarmed, major; by the greatest good luck in the world I happen to have heard of an antidote which *delays* the action of poison in a most remarkable manner, and this antidote I have already taken, my love; so don't agitate yourself, but just tell me if you don't think this would be an excellent opportunity for us to get rid of those tiresome Perkinses? Patty and I are both of us as sick of them as possible. The truth is, you see, that every thing is perfectly different from what we expected. I had no idea of our getting on as we have done, and as I have no doubt in the world that we shall do again, if we can contrive to get off before that senator man comes to look after you. But these lanky Perkinses are ten times more plague than profit, and I'd give any thing to be fairly quit of them."

"That's very likely, I think; but I protest I don't very well see how you are to set about it," returned the major drily.

"Leave that to me, my dear, I'll just have a try for it, at any rate. And now I think you

had better get sight of Patty, and tell her that I am very ill. You may tell her the poison story, if you like it, only don't frighten her, poor thing. As to her Don—"

"Oh, as to her Don," interrupted the major, laughing, "you may depend upon it he will be exceedingly intelligent upon the subject."

"Pray don't laugh so very loud. Just fancy any one hearing you!" whispered his wife.

Major Allen Barnaby promised to be more discreet; and after a little further conversation concerning the necessary packing, and the best means of setting the Perkinses to do it, if they could be left behind without offending them, he departed.

It is unnecessary to follow every stage of the process by which the whole business was finally arranged; it will be sufficient to state that before noon, on the day following the great Big-Gang Bank dinner-party, Mrs. Major Allen Barnaby was laid, amidst an inconceivable number of pillows and cushions at the bottom of a Deerborn, with her adoring husband sitting beside her, to watch every movement, and administer every attention, as it drove gently along towards

the place at which they hoped to meet a steam-boat; while Patty and her Don followed in another carriage, having "another still" behind them, conveying their baggage. A very few words had settled the Perkins' question most satisfactorily to all parties.

Mrs. Beauchamp rejoiced with no common joy at the idea of still retaining near her a fraction of the enlightened English party, whose introduction to her friends had been attended with so much *éclat*; and the Miss Perkinses were by no means sorry for the transfer, being, to say the truth, rather tired of the patronage under which they had left their native land. Not to mention that the worthy Louisa began to suspect, from the various conversations which she had held with her friend Annie, that, even in a pecuniary point of view, they might manage a good deal better without them. Fortunately, this gentle-hearted lady, though rather more than sufficiently yielding in some particulars, never suffered any body to interfere with her money matters. She had very snugly made all her own little arrangements of this kind before setting out, without any other assistance than

that of the banker, whom she found was the proper person to employ upon the occasion, and she knew to a fraction how much, to a day when, and to a street and a number where, she might reckon upon her resources. The parting, however, though not regretted, was exceedingly affectionate, and many were the assurances exchanged that they should meet again, somewhere or other, very soon.

It would be difficult to say why it was that neither of the Miss Perkinses believed one single word about Mrs. Allen Barnaby's sudden indisposition; but such was the fact, though they hinted not this scepticism to any human being, save each other. Perhaps Miss Louisa might retain in her memory a sufficient number of by-gone make-believes, to generate doubts upon the present occasion; and perhaps the sympathizing Miss Matilda might discover something life-like, and even healthy, in the anxiety expressed by her dear friend, whenever Mrs. Beauchamp left her side, concerning the safety of such of her suits as had been unpacked since their arrival at "the Bank." Whatever the cause, the fact was as I have said; neither of

the sisters gave faith to her statement concerning her dreadful sufferings ; and I mention this in justice to the spinsters, who, notwithstanding their various little peculiarities, were not so hard-hearted as to have seen any lady of their acquaintance poisoned, and packed up, in so very alarming a state, without feeling much greater concern for her condition than they now did for that of Mrs. Allen Barnaby. They were both of them too wise, however, as I have before stated, to hint their suspicions to the amiable lady who cherished them both so kindly (and so very conveniently) for no reason in the world but because they were Mrs. Allen Barnaby's *attachées*.

CHAPTER XII.

Sundry adventures at Big-Gang Bank—Mr. Egerton gets into disgrace—Miss Louisa Perkins is very kind to him—He makes an assignation with her.

BEFORE I follow my heroine in her further progress, I must say a few words concerning some of the personages she had left behind her. For the Miss Perkinses the reader need have no anxieties for several months to come. The noble emotions of admiration and gratitude to which Mrs. Allen Barnaby's efforts in favour of the slave system had given rise, were not of a nature to fade away hastily; for all the strongest passions of the planter race were roused in the cause, and it was impossible to mention her name without producing among them an universal murmur of affectionate applause. So deep, and so sincere was this feeling, that many

of the families who had been looking forward to a visit from the enlightened traveller, were but too happy to soothe their disappointment at not seeing her, by obtaining a visit from her dear friends and travelling companions of sufficient duration to permit their being shown and exhibited in all directions; in proof that their hosts, for the time being, were really and truly among the happy few who were personally acquainted with the illustrious lady.

During the whole of this vicarial ovation, the two sisters were, in their different ways, exceedingly happy. Miss Louisa, it is true, never saw any other American young lady that she admired quite as much as Annie; but her spirits were sustained in a most delightful state, made up of brilliant hopes and comfortable certainties. She was feasted, waited upon, and in all respects treated with the highest consideration, while her little purse scarcely became lighter by a single cent.

This was a sober certainty: while her hopes were sustained by watching day by day the prodigious politeness of the American bachelors to her sister, which she would not suffer herself

✓ to doubt, must, in time, come to something. And as for Miss Matilda herself, she lived in a state of continual ecstacy. She was handed about by the elbow wherever she moved; nobody ever seemed to forget that she was in the room; the ladies taught her how to arrange a "spit-curl," so as to defy the moistifying effects of the climate and the season; and in every drawing-room she entered, the very first and best of the gentlemen, single as well as married, seemed to take a pride in showing how greatly they admired her.

We will leave our old acquaintances in this happy condition, and turn to take a glance at poor Annie Beauchamp. All the joy that the departure of Mrs. Allen Barnaby and Co. might have given her, under other circumstances, was merged and forgotten in the deeper interest of a scene which occurred immediately afterwards.

Frederick Egerton had, as I before mentioned, again been induced to watch the peculiar manner in which the dark-eyed, silent son-in-law of Major Allen Barnaby seemed to float round and round the card-table at which his father-in-law was engaged. Had he never observed it be-

fore, the circumstance might not so completely have awakened his attention now ; but his observation being stimulated by the suspicion he had previously conceived, he very soon became convinced that the father and son were in league together, and that the former did not play fairly.

Having at length fully made up his mind on this point, he retired to bed. Had there been no such being as Annie Beauchamp in existence, it may be doubted whether the young Englishman would have thought himself called upon to interfere in so very delicate a business, especially as he had no power of bringing forward any positive proof on the subject ; but the idea of suffering the father of one who was becoming every hour more closely interwoven with all his future hopes, to suffer wrong, to permit, in short, the father of Annie to be cheated and betrayed by a travelling swindler, and that swindler an Englishman, was intolerable ; and after long cogitation with himself, he at length dropped asleep, with the determination of mentioning the circumstance to Annie himself, and leaving the future management of the affair to her discretion.

It was very late when Egerton went to sleep, and it was not very early when he woke ; but upon summoning a slave, and inquiring whether the family had breakfasted, he was told that the house was in great confusion on account of the English biggest lady being taken ill, and like to die. He then ventured to inquire for Miss Beauchamp, and was informed that she had not yet left her room.

Vexed and harassed with the uncertainty of what he ought to do in this new state of things, he entered the usual breakfast-room, and finding it entirely unoccupied, though there were symptoms of several persons having breakfasted there, he sat down alone, broke his fast upon what he found, and then rambled out upon the lawn, determined to occupy the interval, till the next hour of family meeting, as he could, and then to be guided as to what he ought to do, by the position of the parties who should then assemble. If he should find that the illustrious authoress was really at the point of death, he generously made up his mind to let her die in peace ; but in case it proved, as he strongly suspected, that the slave he had questioned had talked about

that of which he knew nothing, he was equally determined by some means or other to put the family upon their guard.

In pursuance of this intention, he strolled away into the rice-grounds, his curiosity to see the cultivation of a crop so new to him, making him for an hour or so forget the fatigue which the intense heat produced. He questioned several of the slaves, but found them uniformly unwilling to converse, a sort of sullen reserve which equally surprised and disgusted him, till he was unable to judge the cause of it more fairly by the finesse of a negro youth, who, while he was attempting to elicit some local information from the man next him, said in a low, but very distinct voice, and without, for an instant, intermitting his labour, or changing his attitude,

“ Massa besser no talk nigger slave. White looker watch.”

Thus put on his guard, he took care to give no immediate indication that he had been thus warned, and moved on with an air of idle indifference; but ere he had taken many steps, he was enabled to comprehend the necessity of

the warning by perceiving that there was indeed a white looker on the watch; for a fellow of that complexion, but with a scowl as black as night, was following his movements from behind the shelter of a palmeto bush.

Rendered cautious, for the sake of the poor negroes, by this discovery, Mr. Egerton determined to pursue his study of statistics, in this direction, no further, and immediately returned to the house. In the usual *keeping*-room he found the eldest Miss Perkins seated alone, in expectation of the arrival of her friend Annie, who had promised to lead her to some retreat in the grounds that had the reputation of being first-rate cool.

Egerton immediately desired her to inform him if it were true that Mrs. Allen Barnaby was dangerously ill. Miss Louisa simpered a little, and replied,

“Oh dear, sir, I hope not.”

“I wonder, then, what the black meant who told me that all the house was in confusion, and the biggest of the lady visitors at the point of death.”

Miss Louisa laughed outright, for she never

felt at all afraid of Mr. Egerton, and she was greatly amused at the phrase used to describe her illustrious friend.

“You must not accuse the poor black of meaning to tell stories either, Mr. Egerton,” said she; “and, indeed, what he said was strictly true, as far as the confusion of the house goes, for most certainly the confusion *was* very great; however, it is all over now, and Major and Mrs. Allen Barnaby, their daughter, and son-in-law, are all set off for New York.”

“All set off for New York?” repeated Egerton, in an accent that seemed rather to puzzle Miss Louisa.

“I suppose you are very much surprised, are you not, sir, at hearing that they are all gone, and we left here? I am sure it seems to me quite like a dream.”

“I am not very greatly surprised that Major Allen Barnaby should have taken himself off,” replied the young man; “but I am very glad,” he added, with a friendly smile, “that you are left behind.”

“That is very kind of you, sir,” said the grateful spinster, looking up in his face, how-

ever, as if she wished him to say a little more on the subject. "But I wonder you are not a little more surprised, sir."

"My good lady," he replied, "will you tell me if you and your sister have any intention of joining them again?"

"Oh dear, yes, I suppose so," she answered, but added, after a moment's reflection, "Not that any thing was exactly settled as to the time, but they all seemed to talk as if they should see us again soon."

"I hope, Miss Perkins," said Egerton, earnestly, "that you will never see them again. I have every reason to believe that the major, as he calls himself, is little better than a common — swindler and cheat; and I am quite persuaded that you and your sister must have been greatly deceived, or you would not have travelled in his company."

These words came like a thunderbolt upon poor Miss Perkins, and her distress and astonishment were so great, that her good-natured countryman entered more fully into the subject with her than he had intended, and had the satisfaction of perceiving that his good counsel

was not thrown away, but that she was very stoutly determined never to renew the intercourse thus fortunately broken off between them. Her gratitude to him was equally great and sincere, and the simple but earnest expression of it so plainly bore the impress of truth, that the somewhat incongruous-seeming friendship between them became closer than ever, and he ventured to speak to her of Annie, not exactly as a confidant, indeed, but with more freedom than he would have used with any other individual in the family.

He told her that as the English party invited by Colonel Beauchamp must now be considered as broken up, he should himself take leave almost immediately, but that he should be sorry to do so without finding an opportunity of saying farewell to her young friend and favourite, Miss Beauchamp.

“I hope,” he added, “that the indisposition she complained of yesterday is not serious, but it effectually prevented my speaking to her all day; nor have I been fortunate enough to see her at all this morning.”

Miss Perkins shook her head mournfully in reply, but did not answer him in words.

“You do not think her seriously ill, Miss Perkins?” said the young man, changing colour.

“No, sir, no, I don’t indeed,” said the kind soul, endeavouring *sans façon* to soothe the anxiety she saw he was feeling. “It is not her health, sir, that makes me uneasy about her, but I don’t think she is happy.”

“What do you suppose makes her otherwise, Miss Perkins?” said he, with a degree of emotion that he had no power to conceal.

“Why it puzzles me, sir. I never did see any girl exactly like this American young lady, and that’s the reason, perhaps, that I don’t quite understand why she is unhappy. She is so sweetly kind, that when we are talking together she always seems gay and cheerful; but I think that is only to give me pleasure, for I never come upon her unawares—that is of late, I mean, that I don’t see the tears in her eyes.”

“Is it not possible,” said Egerton, “that she may have seen reason to disapprove the great

intimacy her mother has been forming in so absurd a manner with those Barnaby people?"

"I don't believe she likes it," replied Miss Louisa, musingly, and as if recalling things that had past.

"Then she shall never be exposed to it again," he eagerly replied. "But perhaps there is no chance of their ever meeting again?"

On this point, however, Miss Perkins immediately set him right, repeating many of the affectionate phrases on both sides which predicted future intercourse and continued intimacy. On hearing this, Egerton immediately decided upon communicating his observations to his hospitable entertainers; a communication which he would certainly rather have avoided, but which, from what he now heard, appeared to be a positive duty.

A few minutes after this resolution was taken, a favourable opportunity arrived for putting it in practice, the colonel and his lady, their daughter, and Miss Matilda, all entering the room together.

"Oh, here you are," said Mrs. Beauchamp, "we have been looking for you that we might

go all together to the spring-house. I have had it all got ready for you, with flowers, and the nigger-girls churning, and every thing. I am so sorry that my dear, darling Mrs. Allen Barnaby didn't see it before she went. But I pray to God we shall soon have her back again."

Upon this hint he spoke, and quietly and concisely gave his hearers to understand that accident had discovered to him some particulars in the conduct of the person calling himself Major Allen Barnaby, which made it his duty to caution them against any further intercourse with him or his family. It is impossible to describe the vehemence of rage and anger with which this statement was listened to by Mrs. Beauchamp.

"You are a false slanderer, sir!" she exclaimed, as soon as she found breath to speak; "and happily for the peace and happiness, and perhaps the lives of me and mine, I am capable of proving my words against you, in a different sort of manner, I expect, from what you can pretend to offer in defence of your most wicked falsehoods. It isn't ten minutes ago, colonel,"

she continued, with vehement gesticulation, and a degree of anger that seemed to make it difficult for her to articulate; “no, not ten minutes ago that I met Tomkins in the passage leading to your room. I asked him what he wanted, and he said he only wished to tell you that one of your company, describing him,”—and here the angry lady pointed at Mr. Egerton,—“he only wanted to tell you that this young traitor had been seen this very morning talking and cajoling with the slaves, and that he thought it had better be looked to. And how did I answer him? I told him he was a fool, and didn’t know what he was talking about, so perfect was my confidence in his honour. But now see if the words of Tomkins are not proved to the very letter? Who is there can doubt, I should like to know, this wicked young man’s motive for trying to make mischief between me and my dearest of friends? He is an abolitionist. Let him deny it if he can. He is come here, I’ll bet my life, to raise a rebellion amongst the slaves; and not content with that, just see the vengeance with which he falls upon the excellent people who have now left us, for

the alone reason that they would be likely to stop his wicked plottings if they could. And now, who is there will take upon them to say that it wasn't himself, and no other, that contrived to give the dose that threatens the life of our invaluable friend? It is not my business, but yours, Colonel Beauchamp; but as I live and breathe, I would have him taken up and sent to prison on suspicion."

Here the indignant lady stopped, and it would be difficult to say which of her audience felt the most astonished at her attack. It required a minute or two for the colonel to recover himself sufficiently to speak; but when he did, it was in terms scarcely less vehement than those used by his wife.

The fact of Egerton's having been seen in conversation with his slaves, was in the eyes of both almost the deepest crime he could commit, as it would have been, probably, in those of nearly every other proprietor in the State; for the jealousy on this subject amounts to a passion as vehement as that of Othello himself. Nevertheless, the prudent colonel did not appear to approve the scheme of sending the offender to

prison, although he entertained no doubt whatever that his lady's conjecture was perfectly correct as to the cause of the imputation thrown on the character of Major Allen Barnaby. He had been himself exceedingly tipsy the night before, and all he recollected or knew as to the result of the long hours of high play in which he and his friends had indulged, was that he had discovered himself in the morning to have been the winner of twenty dollars. To him, therefore, it appeared quite evident that nothing but malice could have dictated the statement they had heard, and accordingly he scrupled not to say as much, adding that the object of the slander being as evident as the slander itself, the sooner the utterer of it was out of his house and off his premises, the better.

For half a moment Egerton stood silent, as if uncertain what he should reply, and in that half moment he caught sight of Annie, who was standing at the other end of the room, her cheeks and lips as colourless as marble, and with both her hands resting upon the back of a chair, as if to prevent herself from falling. A wild thought of flying towards her, of proclaiming his

love, and rebutting the charge brought against him, rushed through his brain ; but soberer thoughts succeeded, and a more dignified line of conduct suggested itself.

“Colonel Beauchamp,” he said, “there is no chance at this moment that my telling you I am wholly innocent of the charge brought against me, should be listened to either by yourself or your lady ; and therefore I shall abstain from all protestation on the subject. I beg to thank you for your obliging hospitality, and to assure you that I shall remember that, when your very idle suspicions against me shall be forgotten. As I have no servant with me, I must beg permission to enter the room I have occupied for a few moments, that I may throw my things together preparatory to their removal. Farewell.”

Having spoken these words, the young man took his leave of Miss Matilda Perkins by a very civil bow, and then passing on to her sister, who was standing at no great distance from Annie, he took her hand, and said in a tone that could be distinctly heard by none but herself,

“Miss Perkins, I feel convinced that I have not lost your esteem, and therefore I venture to

ask a favour of you on which the happiness of my life depends. Will you contrive this evening to bring your young friend, Miss Beauchamp, to the house we all visited together on Tuesday last, and at the same hour?"

These words were uttered very rapidly, and he looked to the good lady's eyes, rather than her lips, for the reply. It was given with equal caution and kindness, and with one more glance at the trembling Annie, he left the room. The result of this rendezvous must be told hereafter ; for it is now absolutely necessary that we should look after the fortunes of my heroine.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Narrative returns to its Heroine, and follows her and her interesting Family to Philadelphia—A new and important friendship is formed there—While Mrs. Allen Barnaby devotes herself to her new acquaintance, the rest of the Family indulge themselves by a visit to the theatre.

ON reaching the little village of Shakspeare Town, at which it was the purpose of Major Allen Barnaby to embark, he had the considerable satisfaction of hearing that no steamer for New York was expected to stop there for a day or two ; he therefore dismissed the conveyances so zealously lent for the use of his beloved and suffering wife and her family ; wrote a few affectionate lines to Mrs. Beauchamp, stating, that though violent spasms had returned on the road, the precious object of his care was again so far relieved as to encourage the delightful hope that

the final result would be favourable ; and then shut himself up with his suffering angel at the hotel, reiterating very audible orders on all sides, that notice should be given them at whatever hour of the day or night a steamer bound for New York direct, should reach the station.

During the extremely comfortable little *tête-à-tête* supper which followed (for the negro attendants and their horses were to repose for that night at Shakespeare Town, which rendered it necessary that the every-way interesting invalid should confine herself to her chamber), a discussion arose between the major and his wife as to the necessity of keeping Patty in the dark respecting the real state of the case. The major was of opinion that it would be better for her morality that she should continue to live in ignorance of his peculiar mode of playing cards, as well as the extraordinary facility with which her mother could seem the thing she was not ; but Mrs. Allen Barnaby did not altogether agree with him.

“ As to her knowing no more than you choose to tell her, Donny, about your rules of play, I have no objection ; though, after all, you know,

her ignorance or innocence, as you call it, must depend altogether on her husband. He's up to every thing, and if he should choose to live on the same pleasant confidential terms with his wife, as you do with me, Donny, I don't see how we can interfere to prevent it. But Patty's no fool, and not a bit more likely to make a fuss about nothing, than her mother was before her. But with all this we have nothing to do ; and for you, my dear, you may just tell or not tell, as much as you like. But for my own part of the business, I have made up my mind, as I always have done throughout my whole life, to act in strict conformity to my principles, and nobody in my opinion can be in any degree worthy of esteem who does otherwise. I have always endeavoured, my dear major, to impress on the mind of our daughter, that it is a woman's duty to sacrifice every thing for the interest of her husband ; and as far as I am concerned, I shall merely tell Patty that you had had enough of Big-Gang Bank, and requested me to facilitate your departure in any manner I could devise—and of course, I shall add, that in conformity to the unvarying line of conduct which I marked

out for myself from the first hour of my becoming a wife, I instantly feigned illness, as being at once the most prompt, and the most effectual mode of complying with your wishes."

"Well, my dear, that is all very right and proper," replied the major; "and no man, I am sure, could find in his heart to say a word against it. But suppose she should take it into *her* head, wife, to ask what it was that put it into *my* head to be in such a monstrous hurry to get off, what should you tell her? I do love the girl, and I don't want her to think me worse than I am; and upon my honour and life, my dear, what happened the other night, the accident I mean upon which the luck turned, was just exactly nothing. So I think, if you please, that if she should take a fancy for questioning you, the best thing to do will be just to refer her to me; saying, you know, in your own charming manner, which I am sure gives the finest example that ever girl had, that it was enough for you to know that I wanted to be off, and that you didn't care three farthings, or something like that, you understand, whether you went, or whether you stayed, provided I was pleased. And then, if

she wants to know more, of course she will come to me—and I don't much fear but what I shall find something or other to tell her, that will set her mind at rest."

This point being satisfactorily adjusted, the truly conjugal couple retired to rest; and when the major sallied forth the next morning, he had the satisfaction of finding his black *cortége* all ready to depart, and only waiting to receive the very latest account respecting the health of the "missis."

This was given in such a manner, as while it sustained hope, left no room for surprise at the too prompt recovery of the assassinated authoress—and then the carriages and their guard of honour retreated, leaving the major and his charming helpmate at liberty to rejoice at their ease, at the perfect success of a stratagem which had enabled them to escape from an embarrassment that might have proved not a little perplexing.

"Now for it," exclaimed Mrs. Allen Barnaby, as she watched from her bed-room window the last of the three vehicles disappearing behind the trees, "now, my dear, let us look after

Patty, and settle all together what we had better do next."

"We will settle, my dear," replied her polite husband, "as soon as you please; but as to our doing it *all together*, I see no need of that. Neither the Don nor his lady, as I take it, will make any objection to follow, let us move which way we will."

"I am decidedly for Philadelphia," said the lady.

"And I, with grief I confess it, am decidedly against it," responded the gentleman; "but I will give you an excellent reason for it. There is no high play at Philadelphia."

"And that is precisely the excellent reason for which you ought to go there," rejoined Mrs. Allen Barnaby. "Why was it, if you please, that we made such a forced march from our snug quarters at the Beauchamps? And why did I consent to lie for the best part of two days like a sick dog in a basket? Wasn't it wholly and solely for the purpose of your removing yourself, my good Mr. Major, from the place where a certain Mr. Themistocles Joseph John Hapford (you see I have not forgotten the

precious name to which I am to owe my darling dollars), was likely to find you? And where, I should like to know, would he be so little apt to look for you, as in a city where there is no high play going on?"

"I hope I shall never be such a fool, wife, as to fix downright upon any thing without first taking your judgment upon it," said the major, with energy. "You most decidedly are what our admirable friends have called first-rate. Philadelphia then let it be. I'll go and mystify Patty a little; but I think I shall only say I was tired, and got you for fun to play sick, because I wanted to be off. There is no need to frighten her, you know, and make her fancy that every bush she sees is a constable running after me."

"But stop one minute," returned his wife. "Just tell me before you go, whether you mean to take what the ladies here call 'a spell of boarding,' or whether you shall prefer going into private lodgings?"

"As you will, my dear," replied the major, who certainly became more and more convinced every day of his life that his wife was one of the cleverest women in the world. "I really had

much rather that you should settle that point yourself."

"Then we will board, major," she replied, with her usual decision of purpose. "As we are absolutely without letters or introductions of any kind, it is necessary now, as it was at first, that we should get where setting ourselves off a little will turn to account."

The major kissed his hand to her and walked off, saying, as he went,

"*Bravissimo !* You are the best trump, my dear, that ever fell to my share. And now I'll go and do what is needful with our Patty, and then give orders that notice shall be given us when the first steamer for Philadelphia arrives."

Nothing could be more prosperous than the little voyage, which partly by river, and partly by sea, brought my heroine and her amiable family to Philadelphia. They had made themselves sufficiently agreeable on board the steamboat, to have obtained a good deal of useful local information in return for the answers they had thought proper to give in the national cross-examination to which, as a matter of course, they had been subjected during the

voyage. The name, and all other particulars relative to the most fashionable boarding-house in the city, made part of this, and they immediately made use of it, by ordering their baggage to be conveyed at once to No. —, Chesnut-street, following themselves on foot.

On inquiring for the Mrs. Simcoe, whom they had been instructed to ask for, as the head of the establishment, they were ushered through an exquisitely neat hall to a large handsome parlour at the back of the house. At the moment they entered it was unoccupied, save by the glossy furniture which shone with all the brightness that horse-hair and mahogany can show, when not a single particle of dust is permitted to tarnish its brilliance.

“It’s a clean place, at any rate,” observed the major.

“But the sofa is not half so soft and comfortable as those at New Orleans, or at the Beauchamp’s either,” exclaimed Patty, very nearly getting a fall, by sliding off the firmly-stuffed, and treacherously-sloping imitation of a couch, upon which she had thrown herself at full length with her usual vivacity.

“ I can’t say I over-much like the style of it,” said Mrs. Allen Barnaby ; “ the things all look as if they were set out more for show than use.”

The Don said nothing, but he took the liberty of looking about him, and his pale yellow nose assumed an attitude between his black-mustaches, which expressed sufficiently well a feeling of distaste and discomfort.

But ere another word could be uttered by any of them, the door was opened, and a lady appeared at it, whose aspect must have had something in it calculated to inspire respect, for Patty actually put her legs off the sofa and sat upright. The person who inspired this unusual sensation in the breast of the lively bride, was a quaker lady, of about forty years of age, with a countenance as beautiful as very small features of exquisite regularity, and a complexion as delicate in its pink and white as the blossom of the eglantine could make it. Her dress was perfect in its kind, being composed of fawn-coloured silk and snowy lawn of the best quality, and arranged with such exceeding neatness, that one might have fancied a quaker fairy had been her tire-woman, so guiltless of the contamination of

human fingers did she look. She bent her pretty little head four times successively, while her light blue eyes, which shone with a sort of gentle moonlight gleam from beneath the smooth bands of her flaxen hair, were directed in turn to each of the party.

"We have been recommended to this house for boarding," said Mrs. Allen Barnaby, in a tone a little less peremptory than was usual with her.

"May I ask who it was that sent thee?" demanded the gentle quaker.

"Upon my word, ma'am, I don't know the name of the gentleman," replied my heroine, a little offended perhaps at the doubt, or the caution, which the question seemed to indicate. "But perhaps you may know the name of Colonel Beauchamp? We have been staying with him and his lady for a long visit; and if you know anything about them, that must be quite recommendation enough I suppose."

"No doubt of it, friend, if I chanced to know them, but I do not; and thee canst understand that this makes all the difference," replied Mrs. Simcoe, in a voice, the bland tones

of which seemed greatly less suited to express doubt than welcome.

“Well, ma’am, there are people enough to take dollars when they’re offered, without our wasting our time to find out whether you know our friends or not. I think we had better go somewhere else, major,” said Mrs. Allen Barnaby, looking exceedingly indignant.

“What must we do with the baggage, Mrs. Simcoe?” said a white *help*, opening the door, and presenting a face and figure as unlike those of her mistress as possible. “What rooms are the porters to carry it into?”

This appeal caused Mrs. Simcoe to look forth into the hall, and it may be that the sight of the abundant packages assembled there, suggested the idea that the lady’s boast of being well furnished with dollars had something better to support it than any acquaintance, however intimate, with all the colonels in the Union; and having gently said to her hand-maiden, “Thee hide a bit,” she returned into the parlour, and addressing, like all other Americans when doing business, the principal gentleman of the party, instead of the principal lady she said—

“Thee art welcome to remain here for a spell if such be thy wish, friend. My terms are eight dollars a week for each person, provided they occupy the best rooms; six if they take the second best; and five if they content themselves with the third.”

The bargain was soon made, and the party established under the very respectable roof of Mrs. Simcoe, at the rate of six dollars a week for each of them.

Having seen the various trunks and boxes disposed of in her own room, and in that of her daughter, Mrs. Allen Barnaby seated herself in a commodious arm-chair, and began to meditate upon their new position, and the mode in which her genius might be now best employed for the — benefit of herself and family. The major had walked out into the town, to find which were the most frequented coffee-houses, and to pick up whatever intelligence he might be able to meet floating about; the Don was gone with him, and Patty had proclaimed her intention of lying down on the bed till dinner-time; so that the speculations of my heroine were not likely to be interrupted in any way.

She soon found, however, that she wanted a *carte du pays*, and that there could be little profit in devising schemes, while the circumstances and peculiarities of those to be acted upon remained unknown to her. Mrs. Allen Barnaby was probably not the first person who, when wishing for a precise knowledge of men and things, has had recourse to servants for assistance. Having puzzled herself for a minute or two as to the best means of finding out what sort of people they were got amongst, she suddenly started up and rang the bell. It was not answered by the white "help," whom she had already seen, but by an exceedingly well-dressed negress, having the steady aspect of an old and respectable servant.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mrs. Allen Barnaby, "I thought there were no blacks here."

"As servants, ma'am, there are more blacks than whites," replied the woman.

"Do step in for a moment and shut the door," said the lady, in an accent of familiar kindness. "Tell me what is your name, will you?"

"My name is Ariadne, ma'am," said the negress, demurely.

"Bless me ! what a fine name ! But I wish, Ariadne, you would just tell me something about the company you have got in the house, and about yourselves too. I am quite glad to find blacks again here, for then I suppose there will be no occasion to change—I mean to say that the people think much the same here as elsewhere about it. How many slaves has Mrs. Simcoe got ?"

"Slaves, ma'am ?" said Ariadne, while a considerable portion of anger flashed from her eyes. "The Philadelphia folks know better than that, thank God ! We have got no slaves here."

"Dear me, how very odd ! I thought all black people were slaves ?" said the puzzled traveller.

"You will know better than that, ma'am, when you have been a little longer in a free state," replied the woman, frowning. "I am as free as Mrs. Simcoe, herself, ma'am, and so are all the rest of us," added the offended negress, moving towards the door.

"Don't go away in a huff like that. I'm sure I didn't mean to offend you, my good

woman," said Mrs. Allen Barnaby, coaxingly. "You must remember, Ariadne, that I am just come from Carolina, and that I never heard there of any blacks that were not slaves. So don't let's quarrel about that, but just tell me a little about the ladies and gentlemen that are boarding here. Have they none of them got any slaves or plantations?"

"No, ma'am," said the woman, sternly; "they'd scorn such wickedness, one and all of them."

"Well! to be sure that is queer after all I have heard—and in the very same identical country too! If that isn't enough to puzzle a traveller, I wonder what is?" returned Mrs. Allen Barnaby, adding in a mutter, "When at Rome we must do as the Romans do, I suppose, and so I must pitch my voice for singing another tune."

She then proceeded with a good deal of her usual cleverness to examine and cross-examine the woman, till she had made out, pretty tolerably to her satisfaction, what style and order of people composed the party at the boarding-table, at which they were about to take their places;

and having learned all she could on the subject, she dismissed the negress, first presenting her with a "levy" in token of her gratitude. She then sought her daughter's apartment, which was at no great distance from her own.

Patty was lying on the bed fast asleep; but as time pressed, Mrs. Allen Barnaby could not yield to her maternal tenderness, by permitting her to sleep on, but felt absolutely compelled to arouse her to the necessary duty of dressing for dinner. Patty grumbled and scolded, and indeed, scrupled not to tell her attentive mamma that she was a great brute for waking her; but no such trifle as this could move the steadfast spirit of her high-minded parent.

"Don't lay there abusing me, there's a darling, but wake up this very minute, and dress yourself," was her reply. "And mind, Patty," she added, "that you dress yourself very carefully and very decently, if you please. Don't put on that fine showy low dress that you wore the other day, with the blue and pink bows, because I happen to know perfectly well that it won't do here. I shouldn't wonder, I can

tell you, if we should be turned out of the house in no time."

"Stuff and nonsense!" replied the lately-married lady; "I shall wear exactly what I like best, I promise you, ma'am, so you had better not bother me with any more such vagaries. I shall certainly desire Tonorino to bid you hold your tongue, if you do."

"Tonorino may chance to have the worst of it, my darling," returned her mother with the utmost good-humour; "so good bye, dearest, and wear your dark-green gown, and a high collar, there's a love."

With these words Mrs. Allen Barnaby retreated, leaving her daughter not only very angry, but very much puzzled. Her Don had already been throwing out hints respecting the probability that her respectable papa might get into a scrape or two, if he did not mind what he was about, and had also declared that he should not be at all surprised if it ended by their being obliged to shift for themselves, and that he would not mind setting about it to-morrow, if they could only screw a few hundred dollars out of the old folks. To all of which

Madame Tornorino had paid very little attention, supposing it the result of some trifling dispute or other that no ways concerned either her own comfort, or her own interest. But now that she heard her mother talk of their “being turned out of the house in no time,” she fancied these different warnings alluded to one and the same thing, but what that might be she was totally at a loss to conjecture.

Upon the return of her husband she told him of her mother’s queer ways, and insisted in a manner, somewhat peremptory, that he should tell her the short and the long of it at once, for that she was determined she *would* know what they all meant.

The Don shrugged his shoulders and did not seem disposed to reply with the readiness that was evidently expected from him. He had, in fact, been very strictly charged by his father-in-law to say nothing to Patty upon the *accident* which had occurred at Big-Gang Bank, and he had tolerably well obeyed the injunction; but the Don hated difficulties of all kinds, and he was beginning to doubt whether it were worth his while to run the risk of being taken

up as a suspected character every time the major played, with no better payment than being boarded and lodged.

It was now, however, very nearly the hour at which Mrs. Simcoe had informed them she punctually dined, and this was too sacred a ceremony in the opinion of Don Tornorino, for it to be broken into by any discussion whatever; he accordingly gave his fair bride to understand that whatever information it was in his power to communicate, must be postponed to a future opportunity, and she had therefore, *bon gré, mal gré*, to descend to the dining-room very completely mystified as to what her respected parents were about. The major, who also felt that he had barely time enough to make his toilet, postponed all questionings of his wife for the moment, merely finding time to tell her that he had negotiated Mr. Hapford's bill without any difficulty, and the family accordingly sat down to table together, with considerably less unity of purpose than was usual with them.

The large, and neatly served dinner-table of Mrs. Simcoe was surrounded, exclusive of our

travellers and her gentle self, by six American gentlemen and their six wives. They were all of them, at least, according to the opinion of Mrs. Allen Barnaby and her daughter, dressed more or less in the Quaker costume; the ladies being all habited with more attention to delicacy and neatness than either to fashion or splendour, and the gentlemen having little or no mixture of the chain and pin species of decoration, which usually distinguishes their countrymen.

The dress of Mrs. Allen Barnaby herself was also a model of propriety. The slight and floating drapery usually worn upon her ample shoulders was exchanged for a close fitting, white satin cape, trimmed with swan's down, which, though it caused her to endure sensations not very far removed from suffocation, made her feel herself, as she told the major afterwards, quite of a piece with all the rest of them, and much more likely to make her way among this straight laced part of the population, than if she had made herself "fit to be seen," in the ordinary manner. This "making herself fit to be seen," by the way, was a phrase which, both in her daughter's vocabulary and her own,

appeared to signify the exposing as much of their persons to view as could be conveniently managed by any possible arrangement of the sleeves and corsage; from which it may be inferred that they interpreted *fit* to be seen, into *ready* to be seen, a gloss accepted, as it should seem, by many of their fair countrywomen, especially when preparing themselves for the dinner-table.

But whatever variations in *fitness* the fine judgment of my heroine might dictate, and adopt, according to circumstances, no shadow of changing in this matter was perceptible in the toilet of her young daughter; who came blazing into Mrs. Simcoe's dining-room precisely in the dress which her thoughtful mamma had requested her not to wear, and with such a remarkably deficiency of drapery about her shoulders, that the gentle lady at the head of the table had a sore struggle with herself as to whether she should or should not send for a certain mouse-coloured shawl from the next room to supply what was so evidently wanted. How this combat between meekness of spirit and severity of decorum might have ended, if

nothing had occurred to interrupt it, I cannot say; but the usually silent business of eating and drinking had not advanced far, ere Mrs. Allen Barnaby bethought herself that, however foreign to the manners of the country conversation at the dinner-table might be, it was, nevertheless, her only chance at present for displaying those powers of mind upon which she rested her best hopes for continued success in the land to which fate and fortune had guided her steps. Having meditated for a moment or two as to how she should begin, she said to a mild-looking quaker gentleman on her right,

“ May I ask you, sir, to be kind enough to tell me the name of the lady opposite to me ?”

“ Sarah Tomkins ;” was the concise reply, which certainly offered as little opportunity for continuing the conversation as any reply could do.

But Mrs. Allen Barnaby would never have been my heroine if such a difficulty as this could have checked her; it did *not* check her for a single moment, for she instantly replied,

“ That is not the name I expected; for I fancied I had seen the lady before, and that

she was called Morrice. It is a most extraordinary likeness, certainly. How odd it is, sir, isn't it, that sort of unaccountable resemblance that one sometimes sees between people in no way related to one another? For if that lady is not Mrs. Morrice herself, I don't think there is any chance of her being her sister, or cousin, or any thing of that sort; because Mrs. Morrice's family are altogether English, and have never any of them emigrated to this country; and so much the worse for them, isn't it, sir? There never was such a glorious country as this, and that is what I have said to my husband, Major Allen Barnaby, every day since we have been here. Not, indeed, that he is in the least degree inclined to differ with me on the subject; he admires the country, and the charming people too, with exactly the same enthusiasm as I do. *That* is the major, sir, a little lower down on the other side, with full gray whiskers. A dear, excellent good man he is, and so fond of what he calls the elegant peacefulness of this population, that if it was not for the rank he holds in the English army (and when he goes back he *must* be constantly with the Duke of Wellington

again)—if it was not for this, he says he would certainly cut off his mustaches in order to look more like one of them.”

The quaker gentleman gently nodded his head for about the sixth time since she had begun talking, which seemed to be intended as a sort of civil assurance that he heard her, but he uttered no sound, save that inevitably produced by the act of eating. Mrs. Allen Barnaby here paused for a moment that she might herself eat a few mouthfuls, for she was exceedingly hungry, but having done this with as little loss of time as possible she began again.

“ Perhaps you are not aware, sir, of the peculiar interest which Philadelphia in particular has for English people, and for myself indeed beyond all others. My object in coming to this country was solely to obtain information on the state of the slave population throughout the United States, as I am engaged by the first publisher in London to write a work upon the subject.”

The quaker gentleman on hearing these words, crossed his knife and fork upon his plate, and turned himself round so as to command the side front of Mrs. Allen Barnaby’s

person. On perceiving the advantage she had gained, she performed precisely the same evolution herself, thereby bringing herself very satisfactorily face to face with the drab-coloured individual whom she wished to propitiate.

“Thee art writing on the subject of slavery?” he said, after looking at her steadily for a few seconds, and speaking in a tone that seemed to express a doubt if he had rightly understood her.

“Yes, my good sir,” she replied, casting down her eyes with great modesty. “I have been urged to undertake the important task by a personal application of the very highest kind; so high indeed that it would be inconsistent with etiquette, did I particularize it further.”

“Thee must be urged to the undertaking by higher authority than any the earth can show,” said the quaker gentleman with considerable solemnity, and slightly raising his hand to indicate the region from whence it should come. “May I ask thee what are thy views upon the subject?”

An inferior mind might have been daunted a

little by these words, and more still, perhaps, by the tone in which they were spoken; but they produced no such effect on Mrs. Allen Barnaby; on the contrary, she felt her courage rise as she perceived that she was perfectly right in the ground she had taken, and that she had nothing to do but adhere carefully to the plan she had so rapidly conceived, in order to ensure for the future a degree of success fully as brilliant as that which she had already obtained. She answered readily, therefore, but with her hand pressed upon her heart, her eyes solemnly raised, and her voice skilfully pitched to a tone of the deepest feeling,

“My views, sir, are those of a reflecting Christian,” that being the exact phrase which she had heard bitterly ridiculed by Judge Johnson, when he was describing the “cant of the abolitionists.”

“In that case, thee art about to do, what every good man’s voice will be raised to bless thee for,” said the quaker gentleman. “If thee dost it, friend, to the best of thy power,” he added, “thee shalt find, that let thy learning, and thy skill in authorship be great or small,

thee shalt meet with the gratitude and good-will of a very large body of the stranger people amidst whom thy holy purpose hath brought thee."

This concluding assurance was of course exceedingly welcome to the lady; but nevertheless there was something in the quaker gentleman's allusion to the possibility of her not being an accomplished author, which she did not quite approve, and after a moment's reflection she said,

"I would never, dear sir, have ventured to trust my pen on such a theme, had not its earlier efforts been already approved in the most flattering manner by the best judges among my countrymen. Under my maiden name I have published many successful works; but as my present object is not fame, but utility, I have determined by the advice of one of the most exalted characters in England, both as to worth and station, *not* to let the name under which I have published be known as long as I remain in this country. My reason for this self-denying reserve is to be found in my earnest wish to see things exactly as they are, without

running the risk of having my judgment warped by the species of flattering adulation which literary fame is sure to produce in this enlightened country. That the precaution was not unnecessary, we have already found, for, being determined to see every thing by my own eyes, and judge every thing by my own understanding, I prevailed upon my beloved and most indulgent husband to let me land on our first arrival from England, at New Orleans—that great stronghold of the abominable system that my soul abhors. My honest wish was not to exaggerate in speaking of its effects, and the only way of being sure to avoid this, was by contemplating those effects with my own eyes. But it unfortunately happened that there was a gentleman at New Orleans who had seen me in Europe, and who recognised me as ———, as the author of the works to which I have alluded. The consequence of which was, that all the most important families in that part of the Union came forward in a body to welcome me, hoping, as I suspect, that I might lend a pen, which has been acknowledged to have some power, to advocating the atrocious system that reigns among

them. You may easily believe, my dear sir, that their advances were not very cordially received, but of course I could not avoid hearing an immense quantity of argument in favour of the system."

"And thee didst not find the arguments worth much?" he replied with a gentle smile.

"Worth? Mercy on me, dear sir, they made me perfectly sick, and ill. I never suffered so much from hearing people talk, in my whole life before."

All this did not pass amidst the silence of an almost wholly quaker dinner-table, without attracting the attention of every one seated at it. Mrs. Simcoe forgot Patty's distressing want of a shawl, while she listened to the discourse of her more prudent mother, and more completely still while observing the attention paid to it by her richest, and in every way most important guest, John Williams, the well-known quaker philanthropist. This gentleman, who had amassed a very handsome fortune as a Philadelphian banker, had for some years past fixed his residence at a handsome mansion, at the distance of ten miles from the city,

making the boarding-house of Mrs. Simcoe, his well-esteemed cousin and friend, his headquarters whenever he found occasion to revisit it. This good man was not only in every way entitled to respect, but possessed it so universally, as to render the fact of his entering into conversation with Mrs. Allen Barnaby a reason amply sufficient to make every individual at the table, both male and female, desirous of conversing with her too. The knives and forks were either laid aside entirely, or else used so cautiously as to prevent any sound from that quarter interfering with the general wish of hearing what it was that the stout high-coloured English travelling lady could have to say that should make John Williams listen to her with so much attention. But not even this universal feeling of interest in what was going on could long postpone that strong American propensity to start up from the dinner-table as soon as hunger is appeased, which renders that great luxury of European life, *table talk*, almost unknown to them.

But this interruption, ill-timed as it seemed to Mrs. Allen Barnaby at the moment, was not

sufficient to check the purpose of the good quaker to become, without any delay, better acquainted with her. Perhaps John Williams had never in his life looked in the face of a lady which he felt less inclination to look at again, than that of Mrs. Allen Barnaby. But what did that signify? John Williams felt that it was his duty to make himself acquainted with her, and it must, therefore, have been a very serious obstacle indeed which could have prevented his doing so. With his usual quiet, passive sort of decisiveness, the worthy quaker immediately made up his mind as to the manner in which this was to be brought about; and as soon as Mrs. Simcoe rose, a movement immediately followed by the rising of the whole party, he walked round the table to the place occupied by his wife Rachel, with whom all his journeyings, whether long or short, were ever taken, and said to her, "Wife, thee must come with me to ask yonder foreign lady to go to thy parlour with thee."

The tall, stately, prim-looking Mrs. Williams instantly prepared to obey, but not without fixing a glance of the most unequivocal asto-

nishment at the individual to whose side she was summoned. Had she been the very dirtiest of negresses, or the most wretched-looking of whites, no such feeling had been produced by it; but it would have been difficult for her to have imagined a face and figure that she would have thought less likely to attract her spouse, than those of the person she was now approaching, as rapidly as the unchangeable sedateness of her pace would permit.

“ Rachel Williams,” said the good man, as soon as he had succeeded in bringing the strangely matched pair face to face, “ Rachel Williams, I would have thee give the hand of sisterly fellowship to this stranger. Thee hast not told me thy name,” he added, addressing Mrs. Allen Barnaby. “ How be’st thou called ?”

“ My name,” replied our heroine with a smile, an attitude, and an accent, all intended to testify the extreme delight at this introduction, “ my name is Barnaby, Allen Barnaby, Mrs. Major Allen Barnaby, and most happy do I feel, in being thus permitted to present myself to those who must be so able to afford me

effectual assistance in the important object I have before me."

"Thee must come with us to our own quiet parlour," said the good man, offering his hand to lead her, "and when thee art there thee canst explain fully, both to my wife and to me, not only thy object, but the means by which thee dost hope to accomplish it, and then we shall be able to discover in what way we may best be able to help thee."

Mrs. Allen Barnaby's thanks were profuse and ardent, and she yielded her plump hand to the thin fingers of the quaker with a flourish that she felt at her heart to be very like the manner in which she had once seen Mrs. Siddons lay her palm on that of King Duncan. But just as they had reached the door, with the fawn-coloured Rachel following close behind, it suddenly occurred to our heroine, that it would be advisable that she should exchange a word or two with the rest of her party, before she separated herself from them.

"I beg your pardon, my dearest sir, a thousand times, but you must, if you please, permit me to say one single word to my dear

excellent husband, before I retire with you to your own apartments."

"Dost thee wish thy husband to come with us also?" demanded the amiable quaker.

"Oh no!" was the reply. "You are very kind—excessively kind, indeed; but my good major knows the business to which I am devoting myself, and as he has considerable confidence in me, dear man, he never interferes, for fear, as he kindly says, that he should puzzle the cause by interrupting me. But I just wish to say one word to him, and to my daughter, the Lady of Don Tornorino, to prevent her being surprised at my not returning with them to our own rooms."

"Surely, surely," replied John Williams, standing back with his wife to let the rest of the company pass out, "we will wait for thee till thou art ready for us."

Thus sanctioned, Mrs. Allen Barnaby stepped back, and laying one hand on the arm of her husband, and the other on that of her daughter, she pushed them gently before her into the recess of a bow window, and then said in a whisper, winking a good deal first with one eye,

and then with the other, in order to make them understand that she had more to say than it was convenient to speak at that moment,

“I am going with these topping quakers into their sitting-room. I shall get on with them, never you fear. Good-by;” and then glided back to her new friends, and in the next moment passed through the door with them, and was out of sight.

Patty and her father stood staring at each other for a moment, and then both laughed, while the mystified Don, who understood only that his august mother-in-law was gone somewhere, with a pair of the most incomprehensible people he had ever beheld, and that they were forbidden to follow, raised one of his black eyebrows to the very top of his yellow forehead, and the other within half an inch of it, while he waited till his wife had sufficiently recovered her gravity to reply to his somewhat petulant “Vat for?”

When at length the answer came, however, it was only in a repetition of his words, “Vat for, darling? I am sure I could not tell you if my life depended upon it, unless it means that ma’s gone mad.”

“No, no Patty,” said the major, recovering his gravity. “Do not alarm yourself. Ma is not gone mad, I promise you, but knows what she is about as well as any lady that ever lived. But upon my life, Patty, if we are all to sail in the wake of these prim quakers, you must alter your rigging a little, my dear, or you’ll be left out of the convoy, and what’s to happen then?”

“*I* sail in the wake of your detestable quakers!” exclaimed Patty, almost with a scream. “If there’s any one thing on God’s earth that I hate and abominate more than all the rest put together, it is a quaker; and if you think, any of you, that I mean to skewer myself up in a gray wrapper, and go theeing and thouing, to please them, and that for the sake of getting a morsel of daily bread to eat, you are mistaken.”

This being uttered with a good deal of vehemence, and an angry augmentation of colour, while something that looked like tears glittered in her eyes, her father instantly lost all disposition to mirth, and replied in a tone of the most coaxing fondness,

“What in the world have you got into your

head, my darling Patty? You can't suppose, for a moment, that I would let any body plague you to do what you did not like? Did I ever do it since you were born, Patty? You know very well, dearest, that I never did, and that I always think it worth while to battle for you, whatever I may do for myself, so for goodness sake don't begin to cry. You know I can't bear it."

"Yes," returned his handsome daughter with a sob, "I know all that very well, papa, I know that you have always been a great deal more good-natured to me than ever mamma was. But that makes little or no difference now, and I don't think it is at all right for married people to go on living as Tornorino and I do, just as if we were two tame cats kept to play with, with a basket to sleep in, milk to lap, and a morsel of meat to mumble. I don't like it at all, and I don't think the Don likes it at all better than I do."

The major probably knew by experience that when his Patty was thoroughly out of humour, it did not answer to argue with her; and therefore, without saying a single syllable by way of reply

to the speech she had just uttered, he tucked her arm with a sort of jocund air under his own, and giving the Don a good-humoured wink as he passed him, led her out of the room, saying,

“Come, Patty, my dear, we have got a sort of holiday this evening, haven’t we? Let us use it by going to the theatre. I saw abundance of fine things advertised, and I know you love a play to your heart.”

Nothing could have been more judicious than this proposal; Patty appeared to forget all her sorrows in a moment, and springing forward with a bound that seemed to send her half-way up the stairs before its impulse was exhausted, exclaimed,

“That’s the best thing you ever said in your life, pap. Come along, Don! I’d rather go to a play, any time, than be made a queen.”

A few minutes quiet walking through the clean and orderly streets of Philadelphia, brought them to the handsome Chestnut-street Theatre, and a few minutes more found Patty seated to her heart’s content in the front row of a box very near the stage, and her still dearly-beloved Don

close beside her. The major, however, who had taken his station behind, could not control the spirit of busy activity which was ever at work within him beyond the first act. He might pay himself for their tickets, he thought, at any rate, if he could but find a billiard-table; and saying, as he laid a hand upon the shoulder of both son and daughter, "You two can take care of one another," he slid out of sight and escaped.

Though the yellow-faced Don was neither so young, nor so fresh as his wife, he enjoyed the amusement which he was thus peaceably left in possession of, quite as much as she did. The piece was Beaumarchais and Mozart's "*Barbieri di Sevigllia*," adapted to the American stage, and despite the doubtful improvement of sundry alterations, the Spaniard was in ecstasies. He was himself by no means a bad performer on the flute, and such a longing seized him as he watched the performer on that instrument, who sat almost immediately under him, once more to listen to his own notes upon it, that for some minutes after the opera ended, he was lost in revery.

"What is the matter with you, Tornorino?" said his delighted wife, clapping her hands as she

recollected that there was still another piece to be performed. "You don't enjoy it half as much as I do."

The Don looked silently in her handsome face for about a minute, and then said,

"Vat should you say, Pati, if—" the rest was whispered. But whatever he said pleased her so well, that the thoughts of it seemed to divide her attention with the gay afterpiece, for she eagerly renewed the conversation at intervals during the whole time it lasted. Nor did the discussion thus begun, end here; it appeared to have equal charms for both; it lasted them through their lingering walk back to Mrs. Simcoe's, kept them long awake after they retired to rest, and was renewed the very moment they were awake in the morning. The subject of these interesting conversations shall be explained hereafter.

END OF VOL. II.

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